

Certificate in Evaluation of Public Health Programs

In the
Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences (BCHS)
Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This certificate program is designed to link the university and community in practical applied evaluation initiatives at the community level. The academic component of the certificate program is designed to provide students with a range of skills and tools to enable them to participate in various types of evaluation projects in the public health arena. The practicum experience provides an opportunity to work on an evaluation project as part of an interdisciplinary team managed by an expert in the field of program evaluation.

Program objectives:

- To provide a comprehensive scoped and sequenced set of courses that will prepare graduate students as professional evaluators of public health promotion and education programs;
- To provide certificate training for non-degree enrollees who are post-baccalaureate and qualify for admissions to the BCHS MPH program
- To provide area community agencies with access to trained evaluators and evaluators-in-training.

Admissions:

Two distinct groups of people may apply to the Certificate Program:

1. Current students: GSPH (non-degree, degree, MPH, MS, PhD, & DrPH).
2. Community members and non-students: Students holding a baccalaureate degree may apply to the certificate program. The standards for admission are equivalent to those for the MPH degree. Anyone may apply to the program to enhance their career opportunities (e.g., public health professionals with or without MPH degrees).

Admissions decisions for the Certificate Program will be made by the MPH admissions committee in conjunction with the Director of the certificate program.

Contact Person:

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Evaluation Certificate Coordinator
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THE FIELD OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

Demand for comprehensive program evaluations is rising in a range of public and private organizations dealing with the health and social welfare needs of populations in the United States as well as worldwide. Graduates with a specialization in program evaluation in public health have expanded opportunities for employment in organizations such as health departments and ministries of health, health and hospital systems, educational programs, philanthropic foundations, and consulting firms.

PROGRAM EVALUATION IN PUBLIC HEALTH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Students in the BCHS program evaluation concentration study under nationally recognized expert faculty and research staff. Students are trained in the application of both quantitative and qualitative methods for evaluation, exposed to the newest cutting-edge strategies, and have the opportunity to participate directly on interdisciplinary evaluation teams on actual community-based projects. The evaluation concentration typically involves taking courses in basic and advanced evaluation methods. Required and recommended courses include: Health Program Evaluation, Health Survey Methods, Qualitative & Ethnographic Methods, Advanced Evaluation Methods and Demographic Techniques. A total of 15 graduate credits are required, including a 6 credit applied evaluation internship experience under the supervision of a designated faculty member.

Curriculum:

The curriculum consists of 15 (3 courses + 6 practicum credits) that include the following courses:

- 1) All students must take:

BCHS 2558: HEALTH PROGRAM EVALUATION: 3 credits; spring term; prerequisite: BOST 2011 or equivalent. The course surveys evaluation and policy research methods applied to health. Students learn to critically assess the adequacy of evaluations and how to plan and pilot test an evaluation.

BCHS 3002: HEALTH SURVEY METHODS: 3 credits; spring term. This course introduces and reviews the techniques for the collection of health data through survey methods.

Alternatives Methods course are:

BCHS 2525: INTRODUCTION TO APPLIED RESEARCH: 3 credits; fall, spring, & and summer terms; The goal of the course is to give students a basic understanding of social and behavioral sciences research principles, as well as how these methods are implemented in the field of public health. The relationship of applied research to program evaluation, the link of theory to research, and the translation of research information to applied public health programs and policies will be emphasized. Participatory research will be highlighted. Quantitative and qualitative strategies,

research designs, data collection methods, participant selection, and data analysis will be covered. (Similar methods course may be substituted with approval.)

BCHS 3007: ETHNOGRAPHIC AND QUALITATIVE METHODS: 3 credits; spring term. This course familiarizes students with the basic principles, methodology, and tools of ethnographic and qualitative research, and their application to the assessment of public health problems and the design and evaluation of public health programs. The course provides opportunities for students to develop their own skills in ethnographic and other qualitative research through community-based fieldwork, critical review of published case studies, and development of proposals for research and evaluation employing ethnographic approaches and qualitative methods.

Students may exempt from similar courses already taken at the University of Pittsburgh or another accredited institution of higher learning with the approval of the Director of the Certificate Program. Up to six credits may be exempted.

Required for Doctoral Students enrolled in the certificate:

BCHS 3003: SEMINAR IN ADVANCED EVALUATION TECHNIQUES: 3 credits; fall term; Required of doctoral students enrolled in the certificate program. This course provides an understanding of evaluation theory and methodology with an emphasis on human service organizations. Doctoral students will be expected to develop an evaluation proposal that can be the basis for a dissertation topic; or to implement an evaluation for a community public health agency. **In compliance with University of Pittsburgh policy regarding post baccalaureate certificates, this course will be required for all degree-earning students as additional work. It will be counted for completion of the certificate, but not included as part of the credit-load for the DrPH degree.**

Possible Electives – (3 credits of an appropriate elective are required), including:

BCHS 2561: DEMOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES: 3 credits; every other year fall term. The course covers demographic techniques including rates and ratios, standardization, complete and abridged life tables, fertility, mortality, migration measurement, and population projection and estimation.

Or other relevant courses instructed at the University of Pittsburgh with the approval of the Director of the Evaluation Certificate Program

SAMPLE FIELD EXPERIENCES

-Evaluation of falls prevention interventions in residential programs for elderly.

-Assist in the implementation and evaluation of specialized services for young mothers and their children.

-Monitoring and providing evaluation technical assistance to community-based smoking prevention and cessation programs.

-Participating on evaluation team for comprehensive child development-early education child care initiative.

-Assisting in the development of methodologies for the evaluation of disaster response efforts.

Competencies expected of students who complete the certificate (ability to perform the following types of evaluations and at the following levels of proficiency)

1. Ability to design and implement evaluations based on experimental, quasi-experimental, and time-series approaches (level of proficiency: small-scale, program-based evaluations).
2. Ability to design and implement qualitative evaluation approaches (small-scale, program-based evaluations).
3. Ability to design and implement a process or monitoring evaluation of program implementation (small-scale, program-based evaluations).
4. Ability to design community-based program evaluations from an ecological perspective (small-scale community projects).
5. Ability to construct a logic model that demonstrates linkage between program activities and program outcomes (from simple to highly complex program evaluations).
6. Ability to develop evaluation questions with appropriate data sources, data collection methods, and analytic techniques (from simple programs to those using national data-bases).
7. Ability to prepare an evaluation budget (from simple to highly complex program evaluations).

Description of the portfolios that are used to assess the program

Portfolios allow for an overall assessment the learner's achievements throughout the certificate program. Smith and Tillema (2003) term such an approach as *training* portfolio, which

is a required or mandated exhibit of efforts collected during learning or in a curriculum programme (*sic*). It highlights the core professional knowledge, skills or competencies a person has acquired and is collected during the time frame of a course as a representative sample of the students' work (p. 627).

Accordingly, the following table indicates the materials that will be included in the portfolio:

Assignments that demonstrate diagrams for each of the following basic evaluation designs: experimental, quasi-experimental, time series

Assignment that includes statistical applications for data analysis on a quantitative evaluation design
Document of an evaluation plan and method for pilot testing it

Assignments that illustrate the use of observation, interviews, and document reviews in qualitative evaluation

Document of an evaluation proposal that could be submitted to the federal government in response to a request for proposal
or

Completed evaluation for a community-based program evaluation including all measurement instruments and methods for data collection and analysis, and reported results

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The portfolio will be reviewed at the end of each semester by the Certificate Coordinator to assure that each included document is at an acceptable standard. If a document is rated as below standard, the certificate participant will be required to redo the assignment until an acceptable standard is achieved.

In addition, evaluation procedures will include a variety of activities, including class performance of students, regular meetings of program students and faculty, written evaluations of courses, and successful completion of student community-based evaluation experience.

FOR FURTHER READING

Green L, Lewis F. (1986) Measurement and evaluation in health education and health promotion. California, Mayfield.

Patton, M. (1997). *Utilization-focused evaluation*, 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Peter H. Rossi, Howard E. Freeman, and Mark W. Lipsey. (1993) *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, Sixth edition. Newbury Park: Sage.

Smith, K., Tillema, H. (2003). "Clarifying Different Types of Portfolio Use," *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*. 28(6), 625-648.

Suchman, E. (1967). *Evaluative research: Principles and practice in public service and social action programs*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Windsor, R.E., Clark, N.A., Boyd, R., Goodman, R.M. (2003) *Evaluation of Health Promotion, Health Education and Disease Prevention Programs*, 3rd Edition. McGraw Hill.