



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**Master of Public Health
Program for Experienced Professionals**

**‘23-’24 Guidelines for the Integrative
Learning Experience**

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GENERAL INFORMATION

General Guidelines

The integrative learning experience (ILE) for the MPH Program for Experienced Professionals (PEP) is intended to provide students with the opportunity to integrate and synthesize knowledge and experience obtained during their academic course of study. Although every project will be different, there are some general guidelines that are relevant to every project.

Step One: Enrollment

PUBHLTH 7996 Integrative Learning Experience Preparation Seminar

MPH-PEP students must begin by completing the one-credit ILE Preparation Seminar course (PUBHLTH 7996) the semester before beginning the ILE. To request approval to register for the ILE Prep Seminar, complete the [Permission to Enroll form](#). The program director or the faculty advisor will approve this request. Once approved, students will be added to the class by OAPSS staff. See the ILE Prep Seminar Section below for more information.

PUBHLTH 7998 Integrative Learning Experience

Students ready to register for two-credit ILE (PUBHLTH 7998) should follow the same process as for the ILE Seminar and use the same [Permission to Enroll form](#). *Any student beginning the MPH-PEP before 2016 should complete the Permission to enroll for PUBHLTH 7998 as a three-credit course.*

The ILE prep seminar and ILE are graded S/U. Students may register for additional independent studies credit to complete their projects. Increasing to a total of five hours of credit for the ILE requires an approved proposal and a justification and approval from the ILE advisor. The hours of credit may be taken over more than one term, with advisor approval. If a student takes more than one semester to complete the project, an *Incomplete* will be assigned until the project has been completed.

The actual timing of registration for credit for the ILE should be discussed with the program director and the OAPSS staff **before registering**. Because students are required to be enrolled in three graduate credits during the semester of graduation, students should ensure they will meet this University requirement **before** seeking permission to enroll in the ILE Prep Seminar.

Step Two: Identify the ILE Advisor and Committee Members

1. Each student will have an ILE advisor and a committee of at least one other university faculty member with an M or P designation. Students should work with the program director to identify faculty to serve as the ILE advisor, second reader, and other committee members, if appropriate. The faculty member serving as ILE advisor must have M or P status within the MPH-PEP program. Students are recommended to discuss project ideas with the program director and possible faculty members at least two semesters prior to expected graduation. The ILE committee should be chosen as early as possible, but no later than the 5th week of the term the student is enrolled in the ILE Prep Seminar. Additional readers may be added to the Committee as appropriate, however it is not recommended to have more than three members on a Committee.
2. During the ILE Prep Seminar, students should work with Dr. Wapner and/or their ILE committee to establish a clear timeline for progress and should schedule check-in meetings. These should include the number and timing of meetings with the advisor, number and content of drafts, and other critical steps.

3. Upon completion of the project, students are required to present the project to and respond to questions from the Committee during an ILE review meeting. With the permission of the Committee, others may be invited to this meeting.

ILE Prep Seminar

MPH-PEP students beginning the program in 2016 or later are required to complete the ILE Preparation Seminar the semester before beginning the ILE.

The purpose of the Prep course is to give students and advisors more time to complete the required project planning components, including:

1. ILE Proposal
2. ILE Advisor Form
3. CITI Training Completion Certification
4. IRB or other review board application (if applicable)
5. ILE Topic Description and Methods Sections
6. Project Management Plan

The Prep course is an online, asynchronous course, but must be satisfactorily completed prior to beginning the project. It is the student's responsibility to complete all required assignments within the course's Carmen site to satisfactorily complete the project.

The MPH-PEP program director will assign the S/U grading based on assignment completion. However, any questions related to the ILE must be addressed to the student's ILE advisor. Any questions about the course requirements can be addressed through the course's Carmen site.

Timeline and Graduation Requirements

Students and project advisors must agree upon a timeline for completion of the project, subject to the constraints of Graduate School deadlines. In addition, students may be required meet other deadlines, such as submitting outlines or drafts of project paper, etc. **Students are responsible for meeting all deadlines**, some of which are:

1. Graduation applications are required to be submitted the last day of classes the term **prior to the intended term of graduation**. The application is on-line and available at <https://gradforms.osu.edu>. Please note: the application is valid for that term only.
2. As noted above, students must register for a minimum of three credit hours during the term of graduation. Two of these three hours typically will be credit for the ILE (PUBHLTH 7998), but it is the student's responsibility to work with their advisor and the MPH-PEP program director to ensure this requirement is met.
3. Upon completion of the project, students are required to successfully complete a Committee review. This is a one-hour oral exam, with the student giving a 30-minute presentation followed by up to 30 minutes of questions and answers from the Committee.
4. The review should be scheduled during the expected term of graduation and in consideration of Graduate School deadlines for document submission. It is critical to work with the ILE advisor to establish a timeline that leaves enough time to allow the Committee to review the document and the student enough time to revise the document before submitting to the college.

5. Students must provide the Committee members with a correctly formatted (refer to page 6), near-final draft of the project documents at least two weeks prior to the review meeting date. To do this, students generally must finish their projects by the 11th or 12th week of the Spring or Autumn term to give their Committee members ample time for review. Students completing their ILE in the summer will be required to complete their project in the eighth or ninth week.
6. If required by the ILE Committee, students will revise the document(s) until the committee finds it satisfactory. Once approved, the student will email the final Master's Examination Report to OAPSS staff at the college. Note that the final date for completing all requirements (including the project presentation) and electronically submitting the Master's Examination Report to the Graduate School is generally about *3-4 weeks before* the end of the term. **Failure of the Committee to do so by Graduate School deadlines will result in a delay of graduation.** A specific calendar of dates is available on the Graduate School website <https://gradsch.osu.edu/calendar>.
7. If published graduation deadlines are not met but all degree requirements have been completed by the last business day prior to the first day of classes for the following term, students may graduate the following term without registering or paying fees. Students expecting to follow an **"end of term" graduation** deadline are responsible for ensuring their Committee members also will be available after the initial deadline for ILE review. Failure to meet any of these deadlines may require students to pay an additional semester of tuition.

Masters Examination Report General Requirements

1. Although each project will vary, most documents will be at least 20-25 pages, not including tables, figures or appendices. The length and content will obviously depend on the scope of the project and hours of credit.
2. All documents must be typed on one side of the page only, double spaced, with a margin of at least one inch on each side, on white paper (8.5 x 11 inches), and bound or stapled.
3. Documents must be in 12-point Arial font; however, tables and footnotes may be in 10-point font, if necessary.
4. Page numbers should be inserted on each page except the title page.
5. All figures and tables must be numbered, and all appendices must be labeled alphabetically.
6. The cover page should include the title of the project, the student's name and degrees, the committee members' names, The Ohio State University, the month and year of the final project.
7. The sections of the document will depend upon the nature of the project, as explained on the following pages. However, every project should have a title page, table of contents, abstract or executive summary, and references. The remainder of the work will vary according to the project requirements.
8. Citation of references should follow a standard format, such as that used for biomedical journals or the American Psychological Association. Staff of the OSU Prior Health Sciences Library can help answer questions about citation styles.

A note on using the internet:

Most students make use of sources discovered by Web search strategies. It is particularly important that students recognize three points regarding such sources: First, the “unfiltered” character of much of this information means that it needs to be evaluated extremely carefully. Second, most topics will require some resources not readily available on the Internet. Third, simply listing an Internet address is not an adequate citation. Any information must be identified so that it is unambiguously clear who produced it, what it is, and when it was accessed. It should be obvious that the technical possibility of “cutting and pasting” from the Internet does not lessen the expectation of complete citation of sources and avoidance of plagiarism.

Guidelines concerning appropriate citation are available both in print and at several Internet sites. The Columbia University Press web site includes excerpts and general examples from a particularly useful source:

Columbia University Press. “Columbia Guide to Online Style.” Excerpted and adapted from Janice R. Walker and Todd Taylor, *The Columbia Guide to Online Style* (Columbia University Press, 1998). <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/> (27 September 2004)

An additional resource for citation of references can be found in the OSU Libraries *Choosing and Using Sources: A Guide to Academic Research*, [Section 8](#).

Another note on using AI, drafted by the Ohio State Office of Academic Affairs: To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

9. Once approved by the Committee, an electronic copy (word or pdf) of the final documents must be submitted to OAPSS by the [Graduate School deadline](#).

The student and ILE advisor must agree on the final deliverables for each project. Because projects will vary in format, size and scope, all students will submit an ILE report in addition to other project deliverables. Generally, the final report contents may include the following sections; **however, the contents of the report will vary based on the project, its scope, and other factors to be agreed upon by the Committee:**

Abstract/Executive Summary

An abstract is a brief summary of approximately 250 words. The major components are: Purpose, Methods, Results/Outcomes, Conclusions and Implications. An executive summary is an expanded version of the abstract and is typically one to two pages in length.

Table of Contents

The table of contents lists all the major topical areas of the document with the corresponding page numbers.

Introduction/Purpose

The introduction should state the rationale for the project. What is primary problem the project is designed to address, and why is it of interest?

Literature Review

A literature review is a synthesis of what researchers/scholars have written about a topic organized according to a guiding concept. The purpose is not to list as many articles as possible, but rather to demonstrate an ability to recognize relevant information, to synthesize the information and evaluate it according to the guiding concept that have been identified for the project. The literature review should contain relevant information about the approach; its use in the proposed setting; information about the target population, if appropriate; a review of the use of the approach in the field or in similar fields; critiques of previous uses of the approach; and any identified gaps in the literature.

Agency/Organization Description

If relevant, describe the agency/organization involved in the project. This should include a graphic presentation of the organizational structure and a discussion of how the project relates to the mission and other programs of the agency/organization.

Project Design

What is the underlying model or tool being used in project? What are the specific goals and objectives to be achieved by this project? What design was used to achieve these goals? Was that design sufficient? What resources were anticipated and needed to implement the project? Which partners were involved in the project, and how were these partners involved throughout the process? If appropriate, this section should include a key driver diagram or logic model.

Methods, Key Variables and Instrumentation

What methods and procedures were used to collect and analyze data? What were the key variables of interest? How were those variables measured? What data will be used?

Results

Project outcomes should be presented in this section. The description should present the key metrics for objectives and goals. All tables and figures should be referred to within the text. If a table or a figure is used from another source there needs to be a reference citation. If possible, tables and figures should be placed within the text; larger tables and figures may be included in an appendix.

Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

Discussion of the findings (interpretation of the project outcomes) as they relate to the project questions, goals, and objectives should be presented in this section. Implications of the findings for the agency/organization should be included and how the findings may impact policy. Recommendations for use of the findings and for future activity should also be presented in this section. This section should also include the student's self-reflection about the project.

References

All literature and personal communications cited in the proposal must be listed in the reference section. References should follow a standard citation format.

Appendices

Anything not included in the text of the project report that is important for the understanding of the design, implementation, or conclusions of the project should be attached as an appendix. For example: instruments, consent forms, timeline, etc. All appendices must have references within the text of the project report and must be included as part of the table of contents.

ILE Projects

Project Types

Students should work with their advisors at the beginning of their second year to plan the ILE. One of the first decisions will be the type of project to complete. In the past, many students completed either an applied research project or wrote a grant proposal. However, because of the diversity of MPHPEP students, it may be appropriate to consider additional project types.

Examples of potential projects include:

- Designing and completing a quality improvement project
- Writing a grant proposal
- Developing an applied research proposal or completing a research project
- Creating an online training or education module focusing on the public health, health care or community health practitioner
- Developing a policy white paper and proposal
- A comprehensive evidence review and accompanying policy brief or development of guidelines
- Evaluating a community coalition or collaborative process
- Completing a health impact assessment
- Developing a performance management system for an agency or organization

Three project types are discussed listed below.

Quality Improvement Process

Students wishing to design and complete a quality improvement project should work closely with their committee member to ensure the scope of the project satisfies ILE requirements. While the appropriate scope of the project will ultimately be determined by the committee, students should at a minimum be involved with the design and planning of the project, and they should lead its implementation, data collection and reporting. Students must have approval from their supervisor or the organization's quality improvement lead, and they are encouraged to work with their organization's quality improvement team, if present. Projects can use any quality improvement process; however, students must fully describe and justify the use of the process. Project can be completed in a number of settings, including governmental public health and health care.

The final report for a quality improvement project may be adapted as necessary to fit the project and with approval from the Committee. Resources to guide students in writing a quality improvement project report include:

- [Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence \(SQUIRE\) 2.0 Guidelines](#).
- Institute for Healthcare Improvement's [Publications page](#); and
- Brian M. Wong and Gail M. Sullivan (2016) How to Write Up Your Quality Improvement Initiatives for Publication. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*: May 2016, Vol. 8, No.

Grant Proposal

Public health and health system professionals often rely on grant funding for design and implementation of interventions, evaluation of programs, delivery of services, or research. If chosen, a grant proposal should not be a simple “boilerplate” request for funds to continue operations of an existing program. At a minimum, the proposal should require the following elements: 1) design of the research study, program or intervention, evaluation, or new service; 2) a justification of the proposed approach based on a literature review and/or other evidence; and 3) a budget with appropriate justification.

While it is expected that the grant proposal be written as if to submit, submission is not required. As part of the proposal, students are required to provide a copy of the Request for Proposals (RFP), similar call for proposals or other support for the priorities and expectations of the target sponsor. The choice of funding source is up to the student, but typical choices would include federal and state agencies (CDC, NIH, ODH, etc.), national foundations (Robert Wood Johnson, Pew, Kellogg, etc.), other non-profit organizations (American Cancer Society, Red Cross, etc.), or various local foundations and organizations (Columbus Foundation, Columbus Medical Association Foundation, Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, etc.). Remember that ILE advisors must approve the topic for the project. In addition, it is strongly advised that Committee members are updated on a regular basis to address additional questions or concerns in a timely manner.

Applied Research Project

Applied Research Projects provide students with opportunities to pursue an area of interest through original research.

Research projects can be one of the following types: (1) investigation of a research question expressed in traditional hypothesis form; (2) evaluation of a program, service, intervention, etc.; (3) cost-effectiveness analysis or cost-benefit analysis; or (4) comparative effectiveness projects involving large healthcare databases. While sometimes considered a master’s thesis, most projects will be somewhat different in approach and technical content from a more comprehensive thesis. Research projects should be tailored as more of a practice-based research project compared to a more rigorous academic study.

As with grant proposals, students should discuss potential topics with the ILE advisor. Because the research project need not be a response to a specific sponsor, students are not required to identify an RFP or target funding source; however, both might be helpful steps if there is interest in expanding the project outside of the three-credit hour requirement.