

Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation

**CURRICULUM VALIDATION   
HANDBOOK & APPLICATION**

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# Introduction

The following Curriculum Validation stands within a wider context of international benchmarking of public health education activities through the use of experience and expertise of academic and sectoral peers.

The Curriculum Validation is both a standalone award as well as the beginning stage to APHEA's Curriculum and Institutional Accreditation. As a standalone award, the Curriculum Validation grants to the school a public quality stamp and official certification from APHEA that the curriculum adheres to European standards for a modern comprehensive degree offering through containing the basic structure and core competences expected from a Master level Public Health degree[[1]](#footnote-1). The Curriculum Validation is also a prerequisite for those who may wish to continue through to full accreditation and, as such, replaces the previous eligibility criteria. In keeping with many academic systems, if an applicant does not successfully acquire accreditation the Curriculum Validation will remain intact.

Of crucial importance is that the curricula contents should reflect a modern and comprehensive public health approach containing, at a minimum, one of the following: methods in public health; population health and its determinants; health policy, economics, and management; health education and promotion (see section 3 below). The Curriculum Validation criteria contain further detail of these areas and prospective applicants are encouraged to consider these criteria before applying. If an applicant remains uncertain they are advised to contact the APHEA secretariat as well as refer to the reviewer report structure to understand how they will be reviewed.

The period covered by the Curriculum Validation is 4 years beginning from the date of formal written acceptance. During this period, if the curriculum undergoes a substantive change it is obligated to provide written notification to APHEA and provide the necessary adjustments to the curriculum and module specifications.

An institution which wishes to have its curriculum validated must submit an application to APHEA summarising the ability of the curriculum to meet the Curriculum Validation criteria as outlined on the following pages of this document.[[2]](#footnote-2) The document is organised in such a way to aid the applicant through the use of templates (pages 6 to 12).

Once complete please return signed application to office@aphea.net.

Glossary of Terms**\***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| APHEA Curriculum Validation Criteria | Document which addresses the APHEA Curriculum Validation requirements. |
| Competences | Academic or practical skills  *\*Can also be called qualifications, competences, final outcomes, final objectives* |
| Course | The composite parts of a curriculum, alternatively entitled module, block, unit, etc. |
| Curricula / curriculum | All the content of an MPH educational curriculum (s), clustered around a central topic with all related elements and a logical sequence of topics. |
| Faculty | Academic staff of the institution rather than the physical buildings. |
| Final qualifications | The qualifications a graduate should have acquired upon completion of the curriculum.   * Final qualifications make explicit the profile of a graduating student when he or she enters the labour market; * Final qualifications are achieved by students via the content of the educational modules and accomplishment of the module learning objectives. |
| Integrating Experience | This term has been adopted to cover practicums/internships, final projects, thesis, dissertations, memoires or final exam |
| Learning objectives | A learning objective is a statement of a goal which successful participants are expected demonstrably to achieve upon the completion of the module. (this may include skills, knowledge and practical competences, e.g. "what the student is expected to know and be able to do at the end of the module")   * Learning objectives are defined by the final qualifications. * Achieving learning objectives is instrumental in achievement of the final qualifications. * Learning objectives shape the content, structure and blueprint of the modules, thereby defining the curriculum.   (Can also be called module goals, module objectives, learning goals etc) |
| Module | This is the building block of a curriculum with a specified length and duration. Together, modules cover the entirety of the targeted final qualifications of the educational curriculum.   * Modules offer content that, in terms of volume and complexity, can be successfully mastered by students at a given stage of the curriculum; * Modules together form a coherent curriculum in which preceding units prepare for the ones to follow; |
| MPH (Master of Public Health) | Used in this documentation to refer to "master" level curriculum and equivalent to a "master of Public Health" or a master of public health with specialisations although names across Europe may differ and can include terms such as, MPH, MSc, Master of health sciences, public health care, public health management or public health epidemiology. |
| Pedagogy | The methods of teaching and transferring skills. Alternatives used in the region include, didactics, didactic methodology, teaching/educational methodology, learning and teaching |
| Curriculum (s) | The curriculum or programmes of study administered by the institution. |
| Curriculum aim(s) | The curriculum aims define the domain, margins and/or boundaries of the educational curriculum. A locally rooted public health educational curriculum is instrumental in achieving the institution’s greater mission by formulating a set of credible curriculum aims which support this mission, taking into consideration the specific context. (Can also be called curriculum objectives, curriculum goals) |

\* This table is non-exhaustive (i.e. it may not contain all of the variations in terminology) if applicants are unsure of the terms they are advised to contact the APHEA secretariat.

# General Instructions

A new application must be completed for each curriculum validated. If the curriculum includes specialisations, a written or graphical explanation of the pathways students are expected to follow should be attached. If an applicant wishes to pursue Curriculum Accreditation, an individual Curriculum Validation is required for each curriculum seeking accreditation. For institutions seeking Institutional Accreditation, a minimum of two Curriculum Validations for Master level public health programmes contained within the institution must be provided.

*Language*

The application should be written in English.

*Templates to be used*

Pages 6 to 12 contain the Curriculum Validation application proper and applicants are advised to copy these pages in to a new document. These are comprised of questions and templates that applicants are requested to complete.

*Submission format*

Applicants are invited to submit their applications electronically either as a word document (preferred) or pdf.

*Period of Validation*

The period of Curriculum Validation is 4 years. Any curriculum seeking curriculum accreditation through the use of the Curriculum Validation should apply before the end of the 4 years. Any substantive change to the curriculum validated requires that the applicants inform APHEA of the relevant changes.

*Award*

If successful, the applicant will be authorised to use the APHEA Validated Curriculum logo on their publicity material and will also receive a physical certificate from APHEA.

The process for Curriculum Validation**:**

1. A formal, initial application is made to APHEA either for a standalone curriculum or as part of a curriculum or institutional accreditation application see www.aphea.net > how to apply in the relevant sections)
2. An application (found below) is completed and forwarded to the APHEA secretariat.
3. The Agency secretariat scrutinises the application to ensure that all parts are clear and present.
4. If the application is either unclear or incomplete the Agency secretariat will communicate with the applicant until all parts are deemed complete.
5. A short report is by the agency is generated and sent to two external reviewers.
6. Two external reviewers review the curriculum validation application based around a report template.
7. A short report from external reviewers and agency report is submitted to the Board of Accreditation (BoA) which will include both Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement aspects.
8. The BoA will make a Yes/No decision. Positive decisions allow for the curricula to receive an award and to pass through to the next stage of accreditation.
9. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed and are allowed one re-application after a 24 month period.
10. Successful applicants will receive a certificate from APHEA and publicised on APHEA web site.
11. APHEA's Conflict of Interest policy applies to decision making on validation.

****

**CURRICULUM VALIDATION APPLICATION**

## SECTION 1: NAME AND ADDRESS DETAILS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Institution name: |  |
| Curriculum title |  |
| Address 1: |  |
| Address 2: |  |
| Address 3: |  |
| Town / City |  |
| Country |  |
| Name of person completing this document: |  |
| Contact email: |  |
| Website address for curriculum: |  |
| Date: |  |

Signed by institutional representative

Printed name:

Position:

*(stamp if appropriate)*

SECTION 2: CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Please provide a brief overview of the curriculum including any distinctive features, for example, target groups, curriculum focus. Please also include any areas which differ from information required, for example, credit usage or calculations and explain why it is so. This section is to orientate the reader (*500 words maximum*).

## SECTION 3: CURRICULUM CONTENT

APHEA guidelines for curriculum content are based on the core competences expected from a public health curriculum and are outlined in the following table. Please note that this table acts as a reference. For generalist MPH awards most of the competences will need to be present but specialist public health programmes may find only a selection are present in their curriculum. If this is the case the applicant is asked to add and code the additional competences within the box entitled X "Other / additional competences and learning areas" and to use these within the last column in the matrix in appendix 2.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CORE SUBJECT AREAS** | **CURRICULUM COMPETENCES & LEARNING AREAS** |
| 1. **Introduction** | 1. Introduction and/or essentials in public health |
| 1. **Methods in public health** | 1. Epidemiological methods, 2. Biostatistical methods, 3. Qualitative research methods, 4. Survey methods |
| 1. **Population health and its determinants** | 1. Environmental sciences (including physical, chemical and biological factors), 2. Communicable and non- communicable disease, 3. Occupational health, 4. Social and behavioural sciences, 5. Health risk assessment, 6. Health inequalities along social gradient |
| 1. **Health policy, economics, and management** | 1. Economics, 2. Healthcare systems planning, 3. Organisation and management, 4. Health policy, 5. Financing health services, 6. Health curriculum evaluation, 7. Health targets |
| 1. **Health education and promotion** | 1. Health education, 2. Health promotion, 3. Health protection and regulation, 4. Disease prevention |
| 1. **Other/Cross-disciplinary themes (mandatory and/or elective courses)** | 1. Biology for public health, 2. Law, 3. Ethics, 4. Ageing, 5. Nutrition, 6. Maternal and child health, 7. Mental health, 8. Demography, 9. IT use, 10. Health informatics, 11. Leadership and decision- making, 12. Social psychology, 13. Global public health, 14. Marketing, 15. Communication and advocacy, 16. Health anthropology, 17. Human rights, 18. Curriculum planning and development, 19. Public health genomics, 20. Technology assessment |
| 1. **Integrating Experience, practicum/Internship/ final project /thesis/ dissertation/exam /memoire** | 1. Supervised by faculty (full time and/or adjunct) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **X. Other / additional competences and learning areas** | The list above is drawn from previous work in ASPHER. To keep our processes pertinent we ask you to include here any competences that you believe are missing from the list but which are used by yourselves. These can be discipline related or "soft" / transversal skills for example, problem solving, conflict resolution etc. They can apply to all curriculum/module and integrating experience elements.  Please try to use concise terms which will be universally understood and code them up using X.(plus a number) in the same way as above so the reviewers can clearly see these as self-generated. Place the list in this box and reference within the table in Appendix A. Applicants are advised to refer to the European Core Comptences for MPH Educaton booklet found [here](http://www.aphea.net/docs/research/ECCMPHE1.pdf). |

In order to check the curricular content of your curriculum, please provide evidence that the curriculum contains elements of the following core areas within public health by classifying the required courses within the four core areas (plus cross-disciplinary category) in the matrix below and listing the disciplines and/or specific topic areas covered in those modules which fall into the given areas. Please refer to matrix above to see what topics fall within the core areas and the suggested credit range corresponding to each core area. While programmes may define the public health core requirements more broadly, elements from each specified core area must be present in the curriculum. **(*Applicants will find this matrix as appendix A at the rear of this document which has been orientated to landscape to give more space for the full module titles.*)**

*Matrix to be filled in by applicant (please complete the matrix found in Appendix A):*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Methods in public  health | Population health and its  determinants | Health policy, economics and management | Health education and promotion | Other/cross- disciplinary themes | Number of credits |
| Module 1 | Please complete this matrix as Appendix A |  |  |  |  |  |
| Module 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Module 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Module X etc |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Integrating experience |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total number of credits |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## SECTION 4: TIMETABLE

Please provide a timetable or study plan for the curriculum as an Appendix. If your curriculum incorporates specialisations through, for example, the use of electives please ensure that each specialisation is clearly indicated or provide several timetables to cover those specialisations. The timetables, or study plans, should be concise and be clear enough for the reviewers to be able to see a clear overview of the curriculum.

## SECTION 5: CURRICULUM LEVEL DETAILS

If you have produced the following elements for your national accreditation or elsewhere and they are in English and include the following areas then they will be accepted.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Title of degree(in English and in national language as appears on certification). |  | | | |
| 1. Awarding body/institution. |  | | | |
| 1. National accreditation (mandatory or voluntary accrediting body if exists).   Plus | Body name | |  | |
| Date of expiration | |  | |
| Curriculum or Institutional level (or both) | |  | |
| 1. Mode (full time or part time). |  | | | |
| 1. Off-campus locations (if applicable). |  | | | |
| 1. Language of the curriculum (include language admission pre-requisites if required). |  | | | |
| 1. Admission criteria. |  | | | |
| 1. Curriculum aims |  | | | |
| 1. Duration of curriculum in months, nominal study time for students. |  | | | |
| 1. Number of terms (semesters, modules etc.) per academic year. |  | | | |
| 1. Number of ECTS\* required for completion of degree. |  | | | |
| 1. Total ECTS in core (non-elective) courses. |  | | | |
| 1. Total ECTS in elective courses. |  | | | |
| 1. Total ECTS for integrating experience. |  | | | |
| 1. Total student workload hours. | Total workload hours | Contact hours | | Self-study hours |
|  |  | |  |
| 1. Curriculum coordinator (or group). |  | | | |

\* if ECTS are not used replace "ECTS" for "credits" and ensure calculation is provided in section 2

## SECTION 6: MODULE LEVEL DETAILS

This is a template to help organise the relevant details of the individual modules / courses which comprise the curriculum. Once again, if you have produced such module elements for your national accreditation or elsewhere and they are in English and include the following areas then these will be accepted.

|  |
| --- |
| Title of Module (*please add any codes used if these are identifiable in the timetable*): |

|  |
| --- |
| Coordinator(s) / organiser(s): |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Teaching Faculty | | | |
| Title | Name | Qualifications\* | Hours contributed |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

*\* PhD, Master, 20 years service(in practice) etc. Only provide details for faculty responsible for 25% or more of course load.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Core /elective or optional: |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of ECTS credits allocated | Student's workload  in hours | Contact work hours\* | Self-study work hours |
|  |  |  |  |

*\* includes lectures, seminars, face-to-face, assessments*

|  |
| --- |
| Learning competences / objectives ("*what the student is expected to know and be able to do at the end of the module*") |
| Module level timetable - indicate the timing of the teaching sessions from the previous teaching year: |

|  |
| --- |
| Pedagogic/teaching methodology: |

|  |
| --- |
| Assessments used: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Weeks required and place  in academic calendar: | Number of weeks | Week number |
|  |  |

## SECTION 7: INTEGRATING EXPERIENCE

This section covers the "integrating experience" within the curriculum, such as, any practicum/internship, final projects, thesis, dissertation, memoire or final exam (*these names may be different throughout the region*). If there exists more than one type of integrating experience copy and paste this table for each.

|  |
| --- |
| Type of integrating experience: |

|  |
| --- |
| Description of integrating experience: |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Core /elective or optional: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of ECTS  credits allocated |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Learning competences / objectives ("*what the student is expected to know and be able to do at the end of the experience*") |

|  |
| --- |
| Assessments used: |

|  |
| --- |
| Weeks required and place in academic calendar: |

## SECTION 8: DECLARATION

Declaration by Dean / Director of the institution hosting the applicant curriculum. Please sign electronically or scan and return complete Curriculum Validation application to: office@aphea.net.

**RE: Curriculum Validation application from** *enter school and institution name***, regarding the Curriculum Validation of the** *enter curriculum name* **curriculum**

Please find herewith an invitation to the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA) to initiate the Curriculum Validation process of the above referenced curriculum. I testify that the information given in this application is true and accurate.

ADDITIONAL: We are willing for APHEA to use the information\* provided within this application for: (*delete as appropriate*)

a. Assisting other applicants to understand the process of validation yes/no

b. Research purposes to continually improve the validation criteria yes/no

Kind regards,

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Signatory 1*  *name*  *Position* |  | *Signatory 2*  *name*  *Position* |

\* *All information will be made anonymous and all personal data protected.*



Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation

APPLICATION | Curriculum Validation

# APPENDIX A: Core Competences Framework (Section 2)

*Matrix to be filled in by applicant:*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Methods in public**  **health** | **Population health and its**  **determinants** | **Health policy, economics and management** | **Health education and promotion** | **Other/cross- disciplinary themes** | **'X' Other** |
| **Module\* 1** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Module 2** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Module 3** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Module X etc** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Integrating experience** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total number of credits** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

(\*Replace "Module" with the proper title of your modules. "Module" is often expressed as, for example, as course, block or unit)

1. *The titles of such awards varies widely in the European region and include terms such as (non-exhaustive), MPH, MSc, Master of health sciences, public health care, public health management or public health epidemiology.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Curricula supported /organised by more than one institution of higher education are eligible to seek validation as a single entity. The curriculum will be evaluated against the same set of criteria as curricula sponsored by a single institution.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)