



APHEA

Agency for Public Health
Education Accreditation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE ACCREDITATION REVIEW OF

Master in Public Health



School of Public Health
The University of Queensland,
Australia

Accreditation granted March 2017 to March 2023

AGENCY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION ACCREDITATION
SITE VISIT DATES: October 24-26, 2016

SITE VISIT TEAM:
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The site visit team (hereafter referred to as "the Team") thanks all those involved with the Master of Public Health at the University of Queensland (hereafter referred to as "the Programme") for the preparation of the self-evaluation documentation (SED), the Curriculum Validation process and the logistical preparations and hospitality during the visit. The carefully-prepared and thoughtful SED and validation documents provided the Team with a clear understanding of the programme framework and a base, which could be verified, clarified and augmented through discussions with the various internal and external partners during our site visit. The Team would especially like to express our appreciation to the Programme Leads, Allyson Mutch, Lennert Veerman and the Teaching Project Officer, Laurelle Roberts for their effort in the preparation of the required documentation and for their work ensuring the logistics and smooth running of the site visit. The Team congratulates the school on the way the programme is organised and delivered and notes the extremely positive feedback given by both students and alumni.

The programme was found to be logically organised and coherent and is structured and housed under capable management. The Team recognises that the school does not operate in a vacuum and realizes that it faces constraints which affect its ability to consistently react quickly or be proactive. These constraints, which include budgetary limitations and the recent restructuring of the medical faculty, may limit its ability to make changes or to implement strategic initiatives necessary for the programme to more fully meet its objectives. In this context, the Team strongly encourages the school to continue to advocate the importance of public health and their priorities within the new medical faculty. Such advocacy is often essential to facilitate the flow of adequate resources to public health as a specialisation within medicine and as a discipline in its own right.

The Team noted that efforts had been made to increase the level of student involvement at the school level. We commend this initiative and encourage the school to continue to pursue this and to better articulate the role they expect students to play in the management of the programme.

The Team felt that the aims and objectives of the programme were clearly articulated, appropriate and widely-shared by the management of the programme, the faculty and the student body. The Team noted that these shared aims were evident and embedded in the delivery of the programme, the curriculum and teaching.

There was evidence that faculty were involved in research activities relevant to their areas of interest and that these research activities were well-reflected within the curriculum and

teaching activities. Faculty were able to clearly demonstrate and describe their service activity, be it with NGOs or committees within the community. Again, this service activity was seen to have been fed back into the programme for the benefit of the student population.

The Team appreciates that the Australian tertiary academic public health sector is highly competitive. It was clear that the programme and the school were conscious of competitors. Nonetheless, we recommend that the programme and the school consider how to more clearly articulate what sets them apart from their competitors (both within Australia and internationally) and that they use this information to strategic advantage in programme planning and marketing.

The programme curriculum was found to be comprehensive, well-integrated and truly exceptional. The programme and the school are considering more expansive treatment of environmental health. We encourage them in this effort. The Team were informed about recent changes in the programme in response to recommendations from previous program reviews – for example, the introduction of the projects and capstone course. In its meetings with students, the Team learned that students would greatly appreciate placements and internships and found that students were aware that these were under consideration by the programme. The Team strongly supports the programme's efforts in this direction. The Team were impressed with the wide variety of innovative teaching methods and approaches for assessment used by the school.

The Team found a strong faculty with an appropriately multidisciplinary mix of backgrounds, research experience and interests. The flexibility of the programme was impressive, with a good mix of domestic and international students and a nice balance of on campus and online learning. The Team were fully satisfied with the curriculum and emphasised that the programme should be proud of what they have achieved.

The Team met with students and alumni and found both groups to be very positive about the programme and its faculty members. The mix between international (~1/3) and domestic students (~ 2/3), as well as on-campus and online learning (roughly half and half), was seen as an asset which enriched the programme and the student experience. The Team felt that the structure of the programme is very orientated toward supporting the student body and had the sense that this was appreciated by students. Active support for the non-academic life of the students was fully evident. The Team were made aware of recent legislative and policy changes that had taken place in Queensland with regard to public health whereby the employment prospects of graduates have been strained. The Team was unsure whether

incoming students were made aware of how these changes might affect future prospects for employment.

The student workload was considered by the Team to be realistic, based on meetings with both students and faculty members. Nonetheless, the Team would encourage the programme to consider developing a more systematic approach to the evaluation of the workload at both the programme and course level. The Team would also recommend that the programme instigate further monitoring of graduate destinations and dropout rates. One way in which this could be improved would seem to be through increased interaction with stakeholders.

Support for incoming and outgoing students is provided by the faculty, management and administrative staff. During our visit the Team was given the impression that faculty and staff were aware that improvements could be made in the systematic organisation and communication of this support. The Team encourages the programme to continue efforts in this area.

The meetings with the alumni produced a very positive view of the programme and the faculty, with whom many of the alumni were still in contact. The Team were made aware that, at the University level, resources for career development and alumni affairs were being made available and would encourage the programme to ensure they place themselves to take advantage of these resources. The Team would further encourage the programme to make use of University resources in areas such as programme marketing. During our visit we learned that that some alumni had received career planning assistance. However many of the students we spoke with commented that career placement seemed to be informal, rather than being offered through a formal systematic approach. To this end, we recommend that the programme place more efforts in systematically engaging alumni and in facilitating their interaction with the programme. This could be through career surveys or placements and involvement in common projects and teaching. Furthermore the programme should consider the incorporation of alumni in its decision-making structures.

As part of the site visit, the Team met with faculty and support staff as well as with current students and alumni. The overall impression of students and alumni is that the programme is supported through well-qualified, fully adequate and supportive personnel.

The Team were introduced to the facilities and resources of the school and programme. The facilities, located in several buildings on the medical campus, were found to be a high standard and included impressive teaching spaces. This gave the sense of a modern campus where the facilities enabled the range of pedagogical approaches utilised throughout the

programme. IT resources were found to be of high standard, both as teaching and student spaces. The same was true of the electronic resources available through the library for both internal and external use. The Team appreciated that the programme and school had been able to make these resources available despite financial constraints.

The Team were impressed with the level of student awareness of the ways that their feedback was incorporated into programme planning and curriculum development. It was clear that the students recognised there were efforts underway intended to improve feedback, for example, the introduction of mid-semester course reviews. All levels of the school and the programme demonstrated a positive view to change which was exemplified in the responses and active pursuit of recommendations made during a recent independent review of the programme.

The programme has fantastic alumni who are very supportive and occupy positions of influence. However, as with stakeholders, this resource was deemed to be slightly underutilised. Both alumni and stakeholders were very open to efforts to more fully involve them in the activities of the school and programme. The Team recognises the disruptive nature of recent legislation and/or policy in the region regarding the public health workforce, but notes that the stakeholders offer a range of work and research projects of great interest to current students and could provide invaluable contacts for new graduates seeking work. In view of this, the Team recommends that the programme seek to engage alumni and stakeholders in a range of ways, for example, through internships, practical placements, giving lectures or case studies in regular programme courses, or by integrating their ideas for the development and delivery of continuing professional development courses.

Summary of Conclusions

Criterion I: Governance and Organisation of the Programme	
Sub – Criterion 1.1	Met
Sub – Criterion 1.2	Met
Sub – Criterion 1.3	Met
Sub – Criterion 1.4	Met with comments
Criterion II: Aims and Objectives of the Public Health Programme	
Sub – Criterion 2.1	Met
Sub – Criterion 2.2	Met
Sub – Criterion 2.3	Met
Sub – Criterion 2.4	Met
Criterion III: The Curriculum	
Sub – Criterion 3.1	Met
Sub – Criterion 3.2	Met
Sub – Criterion 3.3	Met
Sub – Criterion 3.4	Met
Sub – Criterion 3.5	Met
Sub – Criterion 3.6	Met
Sub – Criterion 3.7	Met
Sub – Criterion 3.8	Met with comments
Criterion IV: Students and Graduates	
Sub – Criterion 4.1	Met
Sub – Criterion 4.2	Met with comments
Sub – Criterion 4.3	Met
Sub – Criterion 4.4	Met with comments
Sub – Criterion 4.5	Met
Criterion V: Human Resources and Staffing	
Sub – Criterion 5.1	Met
Sub – Criterion 5.2	Met
Criterion VI: Supportive Services, Budgeting and Facilities	
Sub – Criterion 6.1	Met with comments
Sub – Criterion 6.2	Met
Sub – Criterion 6.3	Met
Sub – Criterion 6.4	Met
Criterion VII: Internal Quality Management	
Sub – Criterion 7.1	Met
Sub – Criterion 7.2	Met
Sub – Criterion 7.3	Met
Sub – Criterion 7.4	Met