

Competency Assessment for Public Health

The Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals (Core Competencies) are a consensus set of foundational skills for the broad practice of public health, as defined by the 10 Essential Public Health Services. The Core Competencies are organized into eight skill areas or domains that cut across public health disciplines.

The Department of Health Sciences at California State University, Northridge is using this assessment to determine how well the department is doing in terms of preparing students for a future in the field of public health. By asking students to complete this survey at the beginning of their studies in public health and then again before they graduate, the department will have a better understanding of areas where we are excelling and areas that can use improvement.

Your responses will have no impact on your grade for this class. It is very important that you answer the questions honestly.

A competency is any knowledge or skill of an individual or organization that has been shown to cause or predict outstanding performance. A collection of competencies makes up a behavioral roadmap that is directly related to both individual and organizational performance.

How to Complete This Competency Assessment

The competency assessment should take about 20 minutes to complete. It is divided into the following eight domains:

- Analytical/Assessment Skills
- Policy Development/Program Planning Skills
- Communication Skills
- Cultural Competency Skills
- Community Dimensions of Practice Skills
- Public Health Sciences Skills
- Financial Planning and Management Skills
- Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

1) Read each competency statement listed within a domain.

2) In each domain, and for each competency statement, think about the level at which you are currently able to perform the skill. Then rate your level of proficiency on each competency statement by selecting the number on the continuum from “None” (1) to “Proficient” (4) that best describes your self-reported level of expertise for that statement. Note: The competency statements listed in each domain should be interpreted as broadly as possible to apply to your position and principal setting of employment. In the example below, you would select number “4” for “Proficient” if you think you are excelling at this competency or select “1” for “None” if you feel you need a great deal of improvement.

This assessment was adapted by the Public Health Foundation from an assessment developed by Janet Place, MPH, University of North Carolina (now at the University of South Carolina). Provided by the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is very important to our program.

1. What is your CSUN ID?

Analytical/Assessment Skills

1 = None; I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill

2 = Aware; I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill

3 = Knowledgeable; I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill

4 = Proficient; I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

2. To what degree are you able to effectively...

1. None

2. Aware

3. Knowledgeable

4. Proficient

Describe factors affecting the health of the community (e.g., equity, income, education, environment)

Identify quantitative and qualitative data and information (e.g., vital statistics, electronic health records, transportation patterns, unemployment rates, community input, health equity impact assessments) that can be used for assessing the health

Apply ethical principles in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information

Use information technology in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information

Select valid and reliable data

Select comparable data (e.g., data being age-adjusted to the same year, data variables across datasets having similar definitions)

	1. None	2. Aware	3. Knowledgeable	4. Proficient
Identify gaps in data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collect valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe public health applications of quantitative and qualitative data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use quantitative and qualitative data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe assets and resources that can be used for improving the health of a community (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, public libraries, hospitals, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, federal grants, fellowship programs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribute to assessments of community health status and factors influencing health in a community (e.g., quality, availability, accessibility, and use of health services; access to affordable housing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explain how community health assessments use information about health status, factors influencing health, and assets and resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe how evidence (e.g., data, findings reported in peer-reviewed literature) is used in decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Policy Development / Program Planning Skills

1 = None; I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill

2 = Aware; I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill

3 = Knowledgeable; I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill

4 = Proficient; I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

3. To what degree are you able to effectively...

	1. None	2. Aware	3. Knowledgeable	4. Proficient
Contribute to state/Tribal/community health improvement planning (e.g., providing data to supplement community health assessments, communicating observations from work in the field)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribute to development of program goals and objectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe organizational strategic plan (e.g., includes measurable objectives and targets; relationship to community health improvement plan, workforce development plan, quality improvement plan, and other plans)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribute to implementation of organizational strategic plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identify current trends (e.g., health, fiscal, social, political, environmental) affecting the health of a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1. None	2. Aware	3. Knowledgeable	4. Proficient
Gather information that can inform options for policies, programs, and services (e.g., secondhand smoking policies, data use policies, HR policies, immunization programs, food safety programs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe implications of policies, programs, and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implement policies, programs, and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explain the importance of evaluations for improving policies, programs, and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gather information for evaluating policies, programs, and services (e.g., outputs, outcomes, processes, procedures, return on investment)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Apply strategies for continuous quality improvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe how public health informatics is used in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services (e.g., integrated data systems, electronic reporting, knowledge management systems, geographic information systems)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Communication Skills

1 = None; I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill

2 = Aware; I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill

3 = Knowledgeable; I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill

4 = Proficient; I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

4. To what degree are you able to effectively...

1. None

2. Aware

3. Knowledgeable

4. Proficient

Identify the literacy of populations served (e.g., ability to obtain, interpret, and use health and other information; social media literacy)

Communicate in writing and orally with linguistic and cultural proficiency (e.g., using age-appropriate materials, incorporating images)

Solicit input from individuals and organizations (e.g., chambers of commerce, religious organizations, schools, social service organizations, hospitals, government, community-based organizations, various populations served) for improving the health o

Suggest approaches for disseminating public health data and information (e.g., social media, newspapers, newsletters, journals, town hall meetings, libraries, neighborhood gatherings)

1. None

2. Aware

3. Knowledgeable

4. Proficient

Convey data and information to professionals and the public using a variety of approaches (e.g., reports, presentations, email, letters)

Communicate information to influence behavior and improve health (e.g., use social marketing methods, consider behavioral theories such as the Health Belief Model or Stages of Change Model)

Facilitate communication among individuals, groups, and organizations

Describe the roles of governmental public health, health care, and other partners in improving the health of a community

Cultural Competency Skills

1 = None; I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill

2 = Aware; I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill

3 = Knowledgeable; I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill

4 = Proficient; I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

5. To what degree are you able to effectively...

1. None

2. Aware

3. Knowledgeable

4. Proficient

Describe the concept of diversity as it applies to individuals and populations (e.g., language, culture, values, socioeconomic status, geography, education, race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, profession, religious affiliation)

Describe the diversity of individuals and populations in a community

Describe the ways diversity may influence policies, programs, services, and the health of a community

Recognize the contribution of diverse perspectives in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community

Address the diversity of individuals and populations when implementing policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community

Describe the effects of policies, programs, and services on different populations in a community

Describe the value of a diverse public health workforce

Community Dimensions of Practice Skills

1 = None; I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill

2 = Aware; I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill

3 = Knowledgeable; I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill

4 = Proficient; I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

6. To what degree are you able to effectively...

	1. None	2. Aware	3. Knowledgeable	4. Proficient
Describe the programs and services provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations to improve the health of a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recognize relationships that are affecting health in a community (e.g., relationships among health departments, hospitals, community health centers, primary care providers, schools, community-based organizations, and other types of organizations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggest relationships that may be needed to improve health in a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support relationships that improve health in a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborate with community partners to improve health in a community (e.g., participate in committees, share data and information, connect people to resources)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1. None	2. Aware	3. Knowledgeable	4. Proficient
Engage community members (e.g., focus groups, talking circles, formal meetings, key informant interviews) to improve health in a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide input for developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use assets and resources (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, public libraries, hospitals, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, federal grants, fellowship programs) to improve health in a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform the public about policies, programs, and resources that improve health in a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe the importance of community-based participatory research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Public Health Sciences Skills

1 = None; I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill

2 = Aware; I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill

3 = Knowledgeable; I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill

4 = Proficient; I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

7. To what degree are you able to effectively...

	1. None	2. Aware	3. Knowledgeable	4. Proficient
Describe the scientific foundation of the field of public health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identify prominent events in the history of public health (e.g., smallpox eradication, development of vaccinations, infectious disease control, emphasis on hygiene and hand washing, access to health care for people with disabilities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe how public health sciences (e.g., biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and public health informatics) are used in the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retrieve evidence (e.g., research findings, case reports, community surveys) from print and electronic sources (e.g., PubMed, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, The World Health Report) to support decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1. None

2. Aware

3. Knowledgeable

4. Proficient

Recognize limitations of evidence (e.g., validity, reliability, sample size, bias, generalizability)

Describe evidence used in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services

Describe the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures for the ethical conduct of research (e.g., patient confidentiality, protection of human subjects, Americans with Disabilities Act)

Contribute to the public health evidence base (e.g., participating in Public Health Practice-Based Research Networks, community-based participatory research, and academic health departments; authoring articles; making data available to researchers)

Suggest partnerships that may increase use of evidence in public health practice (e.g., between practice and academic organizations, with health sciences libraries)

Financial Planning and Management Skills

1 = None; I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill

2 = Aware; I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill

3 = Knowledgeable; I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill

4 = Proficient; I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

8. To what degree are you able to effectively...

	1. None	2. Aware	3. Knowledgeable	4. Proficient
Describe the structures, functions, and authorizations of governmental public health programs and organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe government agencies with authority to impact the health of a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adhere to organizational policies and procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe public health funding mechanisms (e.g., categorical grants, fees, third-party reimbursement, tobacco taxes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribute to development of program budgets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide information for proposals for funding (e.g., foundations, government agencies, corporations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide information for development of contracts and other agreements for programs and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1. None	2. Aware	3. Knowledgeable	4. Proficient
Describe financial analysis methods used in making decisions about policies, programs, and services (e.g., cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, cost-utility analysis, return on investment)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Operate programs within budget	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe how teams help achieve program and organizational goals (e.g., the value of different disciplines, sectors, skills, experiences, and perspectives; scope of work and timeline)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Motivate colleagues for the purpose of achieving program and organizational goals (e.g., participating in teams, encouraging sharing of ideas, respecting different points of view)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use evaluation results to improve program and organizational performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe program performance standards and measures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use performance management systems for program and organizational improvement (e.g., achieving performance objectives and targets, increasing efficiency, refining processes, meeting Healthy People objectives, sustaining accreditation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

- 1 = None; I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill
- 2 = Aware; I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill
- 3 = Knowledgeable; I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill
- 4 = Proficient; I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

9. To what degree are you able to effectively...

	1. None	2. Aware	3. Knowledgeable	4. Proficient
Incorporate ethical standards of practice (e.g., Public Health Code of Ethics) into all interactions with individuals, organizations, and communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe public health as part of a larger inter-related system of organizations that influence the health of populations at local, national, and global levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describe the ways public health, health care, and other organizations can work together or individually to impact the health of a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribute to development of a vision for a healthy community (e.g., emphasis on prevention, health equity for all, excellence and innovation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1. None

2. Aware

3. Knowledgeable

4. Proficient

Identify internal and external facilitators and barriers that may affect the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services (e.g., using root cause analysis and other quality improvement methods and tools, problem solving)

Describe needs for professional development (e.g., training, mentoring, peer advising, coaching)

Participate in professional development opportunities

Describe the impact of changes (e.g., social, political, economic, scientific) on organizational practices

Describe ways to improve individual and program performance