

2.14 DISTANCE EDUCATION OR EXECUTIVE DEGREE PROGRAMS. IF THE SCHOOL OFFERS DEGREE PROGRAMS USING FORMATS OR METHODS OTHER THAN STUDENTS ATTENDING REGULAR ON-SITE COURSE SESSIONS SPREAD OVER A STANDARD TERM, THESE PROGRAMS MUST A) BE CONSISTENT WITH THE MISSION OF THE SCHOOL AND WITHIN THE SCHOOL'S ESTABLISHED AREAS OF EXPERTISE; B) BE GUIDED BY CLEARLY ARTICULATED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES THAT ARE RIGOROUSLY EVALUATED; C) BE SUBJECT TO THE SAME QUALITY CONTROL PROCESSES THAT OTHER DEGREE PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY ARE; AND D) PROVIDE PLANNED AND EVALUATED LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION AND ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS. IF THE SCHOOL OFFERS DISTANCE EDUCATION OR EXECUTIVE DEGREE PROGRAMS, IT MUST PROVIDE NEEDED SUPPORT FOR THESE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING ADMINISTRATIVE, TRAVEL, COMMUNICATION AND STUDENT SERVICES. THE SCHOOL MUST HAVE AN ONGOING PROGRAM TO EVALUATE THE ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FORMAT, TO ASSESS LEARNING METHODS AND TO SYSTEMATICALLY USE THIS INFORMATION TO STIMULATE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS. THE SCHOOL MUST HAVE PROCESSES IN PLACE THROUGH WHICH IT ESTABLISHES THAT THE STUDENT WHO REGISTERS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION OR CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION COURSE OR DEGREE IS THE SAME STUDENT WHO PARTICIPATES IN AND COMPLETED THE COURSE OR DEGREE AND RECEIVES THE ACADEMIC CREDIT.

2.14.a Identification of all degree programs that are offered in a format other than regular, on-site course sessions spread over a standard term, including those offered in full or in part through distance education in which the instructor and student are separated in time or place or both. The instructional matrix in Criterion 2.1.a may be referenced for this purpose.

As shown in the instructional matrix provided in Criteria 2.1.a, our School offers two online degree programs: the MPH@GW and the MHA@GW.

The MPH@GW is a distance education Master of Public Health program which we began offering in June 2013.

The first cohort in the online Executive Master of Health Administration (MHA@GW) program matriculated in April 2014. The MHA@GW allows students to complete their MHA degree in as little as two years. The program is offered in a hybrid delivery model made up of two parts: eight, ten week long online integrated learning modules and four, on-site immersions. Two of the immersions are two-and-a-half days in length and two are five days in length.

2.14.b. Description of the distance education or executive degree programs, including an explanation of the model or methods used, the school's rationale for offering these programs, the manner in which it provides necessary administrative and student support services, the manner in which it

monitors the academic rigor of the programs and their equivalence (or comparability) to other degree programs offered by the school, and the manner in which it evaluates the educational outcomes, as well as the format and methods.

MPH@GW

The online MPH program (MPH@GW) was developed as a result of the School-wide strategic planning process. First, the GW MPH program was falling behind our market basket schools in regards to flexibility of curricular programming and course delivery modes. To remain competitive and ensure financial stability of the school, distance education was considered an important and missing piece of our education portfolio. Second, the MPH@GW program has allowed us to extend our reach and thus, increase the diversity of our student population. The online program provides a vehicle to support more military personnel and families, as well as many working adults, who cannot attend on campus courses or re-locate to the DC area. Online education has also provided opportunities for parents of young children who also face the challenges associated with commuting to campus. As anticipated, our online student body is older than the residential student body and, in general, has more extensive work experience. We have also been able to yield students from a much larger geographical area, which also adds diversity to the school. Online students are encouraged to be active in student organizations and can serve as student representatives for a number of committees, often participating remotely through the LMS platform or Skype.

The MPH@GW program emphasizes local, national, and global health practice. The program delivers an interdisciplinary teaching and learning experience, with a focus on core competencies/skills, and uses cases/other materials from both the U.S. and abroad. The program's pedagogical approach emphasizes the application of skills and theory and utilizes a "flipped classroom" model in which students complete each weekly unit's asynchronous course content before attending a live discussion session lead by their instructor. The program allows students to tailor their education to a community, national, or global level interest in the U.S. and countries around the world. It emphasizes interdisciplinary public health competencies including: biostatistics and epidemiology; cultural competency; health communication; leadership; professionalism; planning, implementation and evaluation methods; public health biology; and systems thinking.

The MPH@GW provides a practice-oriented MPH curriculum that enables graduates to be leaders in the design of population and community health programs in the US and abroad. The program consists of the GW MPH core courses, incorporates a broad range of program requirements to reflect the breadth of public health education, and includes a choice of ten elective credits. Students can use electives to gain depth in a specific area of public health, or can spread across topic areas as they choose. Students who choose to concentrate their electives could, for example, emphasize areas such as health communication, health policy, program planning and evaluation, or other areas within the distance education curriculum.

All MPH@GW students enroll in the Core Courses (15 credits), Program-Specific Courses (16 credits), and Electives (10 credits). The total 45 credit degree program also includes a Practicum (two credits) and a Culminating Experience (two credits) where students apply their didactic education in a real world setting. The MPH@GW curriculum ensures students obtain 10 program-specific competencies.

The program receives significant support from 2U (<http://2u.com/>). Staff at 2U manage the crucial “behind the scenes” operational activities including student marketing and recruitment, provision of a proprietary online learning management system (LMS) including faculty training, production of all video content for the online modules, technology support for students and faculty and direct support for the in-person immersions. All of the curricular content is owned and controlled by the faculty in the Milken Institute SPH.

Standards for admission of students into the MPH@GW are as follows:

- 3.2 undergraduate GPA or higher;
- Completion of standardized tests with scores demonstrating sufficient verbal, quantitative, and writing competency to be successful in MPH studies OR previous completion of a Master’s level or higher graduate degree in another field;
- Two letters of recommendation; and
- A written statement of purpose.

The MPH@GW program was developed by an internal faculty working group, then vetted and approved by the School-wide Curriculum Committee. The vast majority of the courses were adaptations of previously existing courses and lead by the same faculty members. To ensure that the online versions of courses are addressing key competencies/learning objectives and contain the rigor of equivalent on-campus courses, all courses in the MPH@GW program were reviewed and approved by the School-wide Curriculum Committee. This review occurs regardless of whether a particular course has already been offered on campus, to ensure course quality and ensure that the required competencies will be obtained. The school-wide Curriculum Committee also made certain requests to ensure the robustness of the online program, such as the addition of more methods courses. As a result, both a quantitative (PUBH 6052) and qualitative (PUBH 6530) general methods course were created for this program. In addition, certain courses were created for the online program primarily at faculty request, and after being vetted by the MPH@GW advisory committee and approved by the School-wide Curriculum committee. Reasons for faculty requests to create an online course included the desire to create a course that could be used for practice work (Researching Violence Against Women and Girls, Sexual and Reproductive Health Monitoring, Global Health Diplomacy) or because faculty members found that teaching online was a better fit for them personally.

Specific information about the MPH@GW can be found here: <https://publichealthonline.gwu.edu/> .

The program has a faculty/staff/student advisory committee that meets monthly to discuss curricular and extracurricular issues. Weekly meetings of 2U and GW faculty and staff focus on student and operations issues. All of the required courses have been developed by full time SPH faculty who also teach in the residential programs. The curriculum and any revisions to it are approved by the School-wide Curriculum Committee.

MHA@GW

The Executive MHA (MHA@GW) is designed to accommodate the needs of adult learners who are currently working full-time in the health sector with at least three years of full-time experience in the field. The program will matriculate approximately 25 students per quarter (January, April, July and October) in four cohorts, for a total of 100 students per year. In contrast, the residential MHA program typically matriculates between 25-30 students every fall with another one to three students starting in the spring. The MHA@GW is particularly attractive to adult learners working in the health sector in that while the majority of the program is offered online, students only have to travel to Washington, DC for the on-site immersions twice a year over two years.

There is no overlap between the residential and executive MHA degrees in terms of courses. The residential curriculum has been re-designed into a set of eight integrated learning modules that are delivered online and are five credits each except for the final module (Module 8 – Systems Thinking and Learning) that is four credits.

The first two on-site immersions focus on leadership and ethics. The third immersion provides an opportunity for an in-depth health system analysis. The final immersion provides time for students to present their two program deliverables – an applied organizational research project and a personal leadership portfolio. The integrated learning modules are combinations of at least two content areas from our residential curriculum that logically fit together and are constructed to meet the educational needs of mid-career adult learners. In contrast, the residential MHA courses are typically two credits each and like most traditional courses, concentrate on just one content area. All of the modules and immersions in the MHA@GW are headed up by faculty from the Milken Institute School of Public Health. In addition to a regular GW faculty member, at least one highly experienced practitioner is also part of the teaching team.

Just as for the MPH@GW, the program receives significant operational support from 2U (www.2u.com) and all of the curricular content is owned and controlled by the faculty in the Milken Institute SPH.

The competency model for the MHA@GW is the same as for the residential MHA. The model is made up of 32 competencies grouped in five domains. The competencies form the framework of both MHA degrees and are designed to be in congruence with the requirements of the Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME). The residential MHA received full

reaccreditation by CAHME in October 2013 and the intent is to put the MHA@GW up for accreditation once the second group of students graduates in October 2016.

Standards for admission of students into the MHA@GW are as follows:

- 3.0 undergraduate GPA or higher;
- Minimum of three years of full time experience in the health sector in either a clinical or administrative role;
- Current full-time employment in a healthcare organization; the first three cohorts of students in the MHA@GW have an average of five-and-a-half years of full-time health sector experience;
- Two letters of recommendation; and
- Written statement of purpose and submission of a video with answers to two behavioral based interview questions.

All MHA@GW students must also complete undergraduate courses in financial accounting and descriptive statistics prior to matriculation. Specific information about the MHA@GW can be found at: <https://mha.gwu.edu/>.

2.14.c. Description of the processes that the school uses to verify that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or degree is the same student who participates in and completed the course or degree and receives the academic credit.

Both the MPH@GW and MHA@GW online programs utilize an integrated set of student recruitment, advising and course delivery services and technologies that allow program staff and faculty to establish regular web-camera based synchronous interaction with the student and track student progress. This one-on-one interaction takes place prior to enrollment in the “admission counseling” phase, through several online orientation sessions and throughout each week of the program in regular online class meetings, one-on-one Practicum and Culminating Experience advising, and all the way through to graduation. Unlike many distance programs, our focus on frequent student interaction using a webcam- based platform allows us to establish a relationship with each student and in turn, make the possibility of “fraudulent enrollment” a near impossibility. Throughout their time in the program, students are required to be on camera during all live, synchronous sessions with their instructor and peers throughout each week, course and term (students will have had a minimum of 450 of these live sessions where they appear live and on camera during their time in the program). Students are required to upload a picture during orientation to their public profile on the Learning Management System, which allows instructors, advisors, program staff and peers to verify each student’s identity. Attendance during live sessions is required and recorded each week for live class sessions. Students meet on-camera with their Academic Advisors, Practicum and CE Advisors, which allows for another level of verification of identity and from an academic integrity perspective, ensure that the student is producing original work products. For in-class examinations,

students are required to be on-camera for the duration of the examination, and the instructor (or a designated proctor) is present during the examinations to monitor this. Additionally, many of the live sessions and examinations are recorded and periodically reviewed by faculty/staff for this and other purposes.

Students also submit a copy of their government-issued photo ID or passport in order to receive their GWorld card (the student identification card). This gives us another verification tool to ensure that the name/picture of the person on the ID matches the student information on record as well as the person present in the weekly class sessions. Similar to in person class assignments, faculty may choose to run written work through plagiarism-detection software.

2.14.d. Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met and an analysis of the school's strengths, weaknesses and plans relating to this criterion.

This criterion is met.

Strengths:

- The School has launched two highly successful online degree programs.
- The live synchronous sessions are offered at various times and days for flexibility.
- Faculty have received hours of training on how to “flip” the classroom.
- Our location in DC has enabled us to record and archive interviews and School-sponsored events for classes.
- Faculty are using some of the produced materials from the online programs in their residential classes.
- Recruitment of both students and faculty from around the world.

Challenges:

- The MPH@GW has experienced significant growth in a short time. Finding well-qualified session leaders is challenging in some disciplines.
- Many of the residential students are seeking the flexibility of the online programs.
- Course offerings are limited online because of production costs and time.

Future Plans:

- Evaluating models for more flexibility to move between residential and online courses.
- Potential of offering elective credits through other 2U programs through a consortium-type of agreement.
- Potential to add another degree in collaboration with 2U.