

2.2. PROGRAM LENGTH. AN MPH DEGREE PROGRAM OR EQUIVALENT PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH MASTER'S DEGREE MUST BE AT LEAST 42 SEMESTER-CREDIT UNITS IN LENGTH.

2.2.a. Definition of a credit with regard to classroom/contact hours.

The School and Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) follow the Department of Education guidance for a credit hour. For residential programs on a semester system, for each credit hour, the SPH schedules 50 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per week. For all programs, work outside of the classroom can include: reading, reviewing selected videos, individual and group projects, interviews, and completing self-assessments and traditional assignments.

The MPH@GW is on an 11-week calendar consisting of 10-weeks of instruction and a final exam/project week. A two-credit course includes 80 minutes per week of asynchronous material, another 80 minutes per week of synchronous time in a small group with a session leader and two to three hours per week devoted to out-of-class work. For a three-credit course, we schedule 120 minutes per week of asynchronous material, another 120 minutes per week of synchronous time with classmates and instructor and three to four-and-a half hours per week outside work. The asynchronous materials are primarily pre-recorded lectures, panel discussions, or interviews. Synchronous sessions are guided by a faculty member and may include a number of activities, such as class discussions, case studies, problem solving, and student presentations.

The MHA@GW is an executive format program, which consists of eight, four to five-credit modules which are delivered online, and four face-to-face immersion experiences, ranging from one-and-a-half to three credits. Much like the MPH@GW program, the MHA@GW is offered on an 11-week calendar consisting of a 10-week course duration and a final exam/project week. All eight online modules have a weekly schedule that consists of: asynchronous content ranging between 60 and 120 minutes, 90 minutes of synchronous student-led team sessions, 120 minutes of synchronous faculty-led sessions, and 5 to 8 hours of outside reading and project based coursework. The total weekly contact time is four-and-a-half to five-and-a-half hours per week (11 week terms). The face-to-face immersions include 20 hours of contact time for a one-and-a-half credit experience and 40 hours of contact time for a three credit experience. For more information: <http://mha.gwu.edu/academics/immersion-experiences/>

Academic calendars for online and residential courses: Residential courses are scheduled for 14-week terms in the fall and spring. Summer sessions can be offered in 6, 8, 10 or 14 weeks sessions. Online programs are scheduled using an 11-week term, four quarters per year.

2.2.b. Information about the minimum degree requirements for all professional public health master's degree curricula shown in the instructional matrix. If the school or university uses a unit of academic credit or an academic term different from the standard semester or quarter, this difference should be explained and an equivalency presented in a table or narrative.

In all formats across all departments, the MPH degree is a 45-credit program. Both the residential and online MHA degrees require 50 credits.

2.2.c. Information about the number of professional public health master's degrees awarded for fewer than 42 credit units, or equivalent, over each of the last three years. A summary of the reasons should be included.

No professional Master's degrees have been awarded for fewer than 42 credit units over the last three years.

2.2.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.

The criterion is met.

Strengths:

- The length of our programs provides ample time for deep levels of instruction and practice.
- New online programs provide more flexible educational opportunities for our students.
- Students have flexibility and options in pursuing their degree, including access to online courses through MPH@GW or receiving in-depth training in a specific track, as suits their professional goals.

Challenges:

- Adapting registrar and university systems to support hybrid education.
- Blending online quarterly and residential semester programs can be challenging for students and administration regarding financial aid, student accounts and registrar systems.
- In the quarter system used for the online degree programs, students who receive some scholarships, such as Gates, have not qualified as "full-time" even when they are enrolled in an equivalent number of credits as the students in the residential program.

Future Plans:

- The School continues to strive to meet the needs of a diverse student body through evaluating program length and program delivery modes. By offering more options for blending residential and online learning we will be able to better accommodate student travel and work schedules.
- For the MPH/MD joint program, we will explore opportunities with the School of Medicine to offer cross-credits where content may be duplicated.
- Development of a customizable program for residential MPH students and specialized tracks for the online MPH students.