REVIEW FOR ACCREDITATION
OF THE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
AT
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

SITE VISIT DATES:
December 2-4, 2015

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Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) regarding the School of Public Health at Georgia State University (GSU). The report assesses the school's compliance with the Accreditation Criteria for Schools of Public Health, amended June 2011. This accreditation review included the conduct of a self-study process by school constituents, the preparation of a document describing the school and its features in relation to the criteria for accreditation and a visit in December 2015 by a team of external peer reviewers. During the visit, the team had an opportunity to interview school and university officials, administrators, teaching faculty, students, alumni and community representatives and to verify information in the self-study document by reviewing materials provided in a resource file. The team was afforded full cooperation in its efforts to assess the school and verify the self-study document.

Founded in 1913, GSU is a public research university located in Atlanta and one of 31 members of the University System of Georgia. The entire system is governed by a Board of Regents. In 1995, GSU was accorded research university status, making it one of the four research institutions in the system. GSU is now the second largest university in the University System of Georgia, with more than 32,000 students, over 1,000 faculty members and over 250 degree programs in 62 fields of study. GSU confers more than 7,200 degrees annually and has approximately 150,000 alumni.

GSU has three schools and five colleges, which include the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing & Health Professions, the School of Public Health, the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Law, the J. Mack Robinson College of Business and the Honors College.

In January 2004, the Board of Regents approved the graduate MPH degree program at GSU, and the first MPH class of 24 students enrolled in fall 2004. At the start of fiscal year (FY) 2012, the then Institute of Public Health that housed the MPH program, separated from the College of Health and Human Sciences and became a standalone school within the GSU organizational structure.

The MPH program was first accredited by CEPH as a program in June 2007 for a five-year term. In June 2012, the program was accredited for a seven-year term. In June 2013, the program was accepted as an applicant for school accreditation by CEPH; this is its first review as a school.
Characteristics of a School of Public Health

To be considered eligible for accreditation review by CEPH, a school of public health shall demonstrate the following characteristics:

a. The school shall be a part of an institution of higher education that is accredited by a regional accrediting body recognized by the US Department of Education.

b. The school and its faculty shall have the same rights, privileges and status as other professional schools that are components of its parent institution.

c. The school shall function as a collaboration of disciplines, addressing the health of populations and the community through instruction, research, and service. Using an ecological perspective, the school of public health should provide a special learning environment that supports interdisciplinary communication, promotes a broad intellectual framework for problem-solving, and fosters the development of professional public health concepts and values.

d. The school of public health shall maintain an organizational culture that embraces the vision, goals and values common to public health. The school shall maintain this organizational culture through leadership, institutional rewards, and dedication of resources in order to infuse public health values and goals into all aspects of the school's activities.

e. The school shall have faculty and other human, physical, financial and learning resources to provide both breadth and depth of educational opportunity in the areas of knowledge basic to public health. As a minimum, the school shall offer the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree in each of the five areas of knowledge basic to public health and a doctoral degree in at least three of the five specified areas of public health knowledge.

f. The school shall plan, develop and evaluate its instructional, research and service activities in ways that assure sensitivity to the perceptions and needs of its students and that combines educational excellence with applicability to the world of public health practice.

These characteristics are evident in the School of Public Health at GSU. The school is part of a regionally accredited institution. The dean, faculty members, staff and students have the same rights, privileges and status as other schools and colleges at the university.

The school's mission, goals and value statements emphasize the importance of instruction, research and service, and its organizational culture embraces core public health values and goals. The school functions as a collaboration of disciplines and addresses the health of populations and the community. The school uses an ecological approach to create a learning environment that promotes a framework for intellectual learning and development of public health core values.

The school's faculty are trained in a variety of disciplines, and faculty ensure that the environment supports interdisciplinary collaboration. The school has adequate resources to offer MPH and doctoral degrees.
1.0 THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

1.1 Mission.

The school shall have a clearly formulated and publicly stated mission with supporting goals, objectives and values.

This criterion is met. The school has a clearly stated mission with supporting goals, objectives and values. The school’s mission is as follows:

Advancing health through leadership, scholarship, research and service to better the human condition and promote the common good, especially for urban communities and for global populations.

The school has established value statements that include scholarship and inquiry; human rights and social justice; diversity in multicultural and multiethnic environments; integrity, accountability and transparency; leadership, innovation and transformation; and healthy, sustainable social environments.

The school has developed three goals to carry out the core functions of instruction, research and service. To achieve these goals, the school has identified 12 objectives (eight instructional objectives, two research objectives and two service-related objectives) with corresponding indicators and targets.

The mission, vision, values, goals and objectives were first developed during a planning process in 2006 during the preparation for CEPH accreditation as a program; these objectives were reaffirmed in 2008 as a part of the university’s review process. These guiding statements are now examined annually as part of the school’s Assessment and Evaluation Committee review. The mission and objectives were adjusted in 2012 to add language about urban communities and global populations to better reflect the community-oriented nature of the program.

1.2 Evaluation and Planning.

The school shall have an explicit process for monitoring and evaluating its overall efforts against its mission, goals and objectives; for assessing the school’s effectiveness in serving its various constituencies; and for using evaluation results in ongoing planning and decision making to achieve its mission. As part of the evaluation process, the school must conduct an analytical self-study that analyzes performance against the accreditation criteria.

This criterion is met. During the site visit, reviewers observed evidence that evaluation processes have been transferred or will soon be transferred to equivalent structures in the school. The school has established evaluation and planning procedures that are guided by the Assessment and Evaluation Committee and the school’s leadership. The director for accreditation and evaluation and the associate dean for academic affairs lead the evaluation process. The evaluation plan has mechanisms for collecting data, conducting assessments and providing feedback for improvement. The school has a number of university-wide electronic management systems that provide data that can be used in evaluation. These systems include WEAVEonline, Qualtrics Survey Software, PAWS (academic records), Digital Measures
(faculty qualifications) and the GSU Research Portal and Spectrum (financial management). The evaluation process 1) has stated goals, objectives and indicators; 2) names the responsible party for each objective; and 3) has a timeline.

The director for accreditation and evaluation is responsible for compiling and reviewing data collected through the multiple university data management systems and for assessing the outcomes to monitor school performance. The Evaluation and Assessment Committee monitors and reviews the results of the assessment process annually and ensures that the school is making progress in meeting targets and accomplishing its goals. This committee meets twice a year and reports to the Dean’s Council (central administrators in the school and also referenced as the Leadership Team). The architecture of the assessment process will enable the school to monitor performance and determine the need for changes. While the feedback loop occurs in some examples, it is still incomplete in others. Faculty explained to site visitors that this was primarily due to the need for more time to collect sufficient data for assessment. In the future, it should be an effective mechanism for ongoing improvement efforts.

An extensive planning process was conducted to move from a public health program within the College of Health and Human Sciences to a standalone school. Discussions with school’s leaders and faculty indicate that the university is in the process of a strategic planning initiative, and that the school is conducting its own strategic plan that will align with the university’s overall plan. The associate dean said that the objectives and indicators/targets would be updated in the future to reflect the new strategic plan.

During on-site meetings, the faculty gave examples of how the assessment process has provided feedback that resulted in actions. One example of the feedback loop related to the MPH in biostatistics. Faculty recognized that the biostatistics concentration needed to be more rigorous and that students should be performing at a higher level. Noting this concern, faculty revised the biostatistics program, introduced new courses and increased the rigor of existing courses. However, this issue was not identified through the established indicators. Discussions with the director of accreditation and evaluation and the associate dean for academic affairs described the overall assessment processes that include measures of service and research beyond those documented in the self-study. Although not documented in the self-study, the faculty cited other examples in which service and research efforts have been assessed. These examples provided evidence of a well-planned process and systems in place that will mature with time.

The school’s self-study included carefully compiled information for each criterion. The self-study team was led by the director of accreditation and evaluation and the associate dean for academic affairs. Faculty participated in the development of the document as a whole and contributed to the writing of sections. On-site discussions with faculty and administrators indicated that the self-study was a useful endeavor.
that led to identifying several issues that were addressed. These discussions did not indicate that students or community stakeholders had substantial involvement in the development of the self-study; however, they were involved in many of the activities that are referenced throughout the document such as providing input in competency development and assessment of the curriculum.

1.3 Institutional Environment.

The school shall be an integral part of an accredited institution of higher education and shall have the same level of independence and status accorded to professional schools in that institution.

This criterion is met. GSU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Its last review in 2008 resulted in a 10-year accreditation term. In addition to public health, the university responds to 21 specialized accreditors in areas such as psychology, social work, law, art and design and nursing. The school is an integral part of an accredited institution and enjoys the same level of autonomy and authority as all other professional schools and colleges at the university.

The University System of Georgia has 31 independent institutions throughout Georgia; GSU and two others are located in Atlanta. GSU’s School of Public Health is one of three schools and five colleges on the campus.

The dean is responsible for the overall leadership of the school, including administrative activities and development of the school’s budget. The dean, in consultation with the school administrative officer and the Leadership Team (all associate deans and division directors), oversees resource allocation. The dean reports directly to the provost.

The dean, in conjunction with the faculty and division directors (who are equivalent to department chairs), has responsibility for the recruitment, selection and advancement of all faculty and staff.

The faculty as a whole set academic standards and policies with regard to student admission and the development and implementation of curriculum for all of the school’s degree programs. Proposals to change curricula are approved by the university’s Senate Committee, then the provost and finally the Board of Regents.

1.4 Organization and Administration.

The school shall provide an organizational setting conducive to public health learning, research and service. The organizational setting shall facilitate interdisciplinary communication, cooperation and collaboration that contribute to achieving the school’s public health mission. The organizational structure shall effectively support the work of the school’s constituents.

This criterion is met. The school provides an organizational setting that is conducive to public health learning, research and service. The organizational setting facilitates interdisciplinary communication and collaboration. The school is organized under the leadership of the dean with the assistance of three
associate deans (academic affairs, faculty development and research) and an administrative officer (financial). The Leadership Team includes the associate deans, division directors (health promotion and behavior; biostatistics and epidemiology; health management and policy; and environmental health) and the directors of development and communications. Eight of these positions were filled on an interim basis in the months before the site visit. School leaders recognize the need to develop a more permanent and sustainable leadership structure, and they have a plan to transition to permanent leadership either through the recruitment of new faculty or from internal candidates. Three of the eight interim director positions were made permanent by the time of the site visit, including the division director for environmental health and doctoral programs. The school also has several open faculty positions with ongoing searches in progress.

The dean oversees the academic, fiscal, administrative and personnel matters of the school and serves as the chief spokesman representing the school internally and externally. The dean has the responsibility for advancing the school’s mission and providing leaderships to build a national and international reputation.

The school is organized into four divisions led by division directors who report to the dean. Faculty are assigned to each division according to discipline. The division directors report to the dean. The school houses a number of research centers. The divisions are focused primarily on teaching and academic activities, and the centers promote research. The Center for Healthy Development is a university-wide center with dedicated funding; the others are related to various grants that will provide funding for a designated period of time. Other centers include the Tobacco Center of Regulatory Science, China Tobacco Control Partnership (Pfizer grant), Community Research Center, Center of Excellence on Health Disparities Research, Partnership for Urban Health Research and the Mark Chaffin Center for Healthy Development. The centers provide linkages for interdisciplinary work with other units in the university.

The self-study provides multiple examples of interdisciplinary collaboration that supports public health learning, research and service. For example, public health faculty have been involved in the university’s initiative to make cluster hires in interdisciplinary areas to create critical masses of expertise around common research themes. Public health students also have opportunities to take courses across divisions within the school and across schools and colleges at GSU. Through these experiences, students work with peers from other disciplines and learn how to apply multidisciplinary skills to public health practice and research.

The administrative structure includes the college administrative officer who is responsible for the oversight of finance, research support services, human resources, information technology and facilities. Other
administrative leaders include a director of communications, director of academic assistance and career services and director of development.

In the meeting with the GSU president and vice provost, both expressed strong support for the dean and for the School of Public Health. This support has been evidenced by new space recently given to the school and budget allocations from the university. The president and vice provost noted the recent growth of the school and the potential for further growth.

1.5 Governance.

The school administration and faculty shall have clearly defined rights and responsibilities concerning school governance and academic policies. Students shall, where appropriate, have participatory roles in conduct of school and program evaluation procedures, policy setting and decision making.

This criterion is met. The school has clearly defined rights and responsibilities concerning school governance and academic policies. The school has five standing committees, one ad hoc committee and eight work groups that contribute to school governance. Faculty, staff, students, alumni and community partners are involved in the school’s operations.

The dean, in conjunction with the Leadership Team and all other standing committees, is involved with policy development. All proposed changes are reviewed by the college administrative officer (who is a member of the Leadership Team) before the Faculty Affairs Committee and the full faculty make the final approval. Members of the Faculty Affairs Committee include four tenured faculty members from each core area.

The Assessment and Evaluation Committee oversees the overall planning and evaluation of the school. This committee also makes recommendations to the Leadership Team, administrative offices, division directors and other faculty and staff, as appropriate. The school holds meetings with its full faculty each semester and meetings with staff each month. Planning strategies are reviewed at these meetings. Division faculty meet regularly during each semester. The dean meets monthly with the provost and with the president as needed to discuss school planning and evaluation. Members of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee include division directors from each division, the director of accreditation and evaluation, the doctoral program director, the director of academic assistance and graduate career services, the associate dean for academic affairs, the associate dean for faculty development and the associate dean for research.

The University System of Georgia and the Board of Regents determines the budget for each university in the system. After the university has received its budget, the dean receives the resources for the school
based on the strategic plan and previous state funds. The dean, the college administrative officer and the Leadership Team determine how resources are allocated within the school.

The associate dean for academic affairs and the assistant director of the Office of Academic Assistance and Career Services (who is assisted by a graduate advisor, admissions coordinator and an administrative assistant) oversee enrollment processes for the school. The school’s Admissions Committees (one for each division) convene in the fall and spring to review MPH and PhD applications and to recommend admission decisions. The university’s Office of Graduation and Commencement approves all degrees.

Each division director is responsible for faculty recruitment. Search Committees, which may include faculty members outside of the school, make recommendations to the division director based on reviews, and the division director forwards the recommendation to the dean. The dean forwards the potential hire to the provost. The Tenure and Promotion Committee oversees tenure and promotion and makes recommendations to the dean. The dean then makes a recommendation to the senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. The president of the university approves promotion, tenure, reappointment and dismissal. Members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee include four tenured faculty members, one from each division. The Non-Tenure Track Promotion Committee includes three tenured or non-tenured faculty.

The Academic Affairs Committee oversees development of and modification to academic standards and policies and curriculum changes. Faculty members review the changes relevant to their divisions and grant approval. Once approved, the Office of Academic Assistance and Career Services enforces all academic policies enacted by the Academic Affairs Committee. Members of the Academic Affairs Committee include four faculty members one from each division, one graduate student, the director of Academic Assistance and Graduate Career Services and the Doctoral Program director.

The External Board of Advisors provides insight into the practice needs of the public health community, the school’s competency development, curricular changes, needs of public health employers, practicum sites and thesis and capstone culminating experiences. The External Board of Advisors meet once each semester, and has 14 members including the Public Health Student Association’s president, an alumnus and professionals who are actively engaged in public health work.

Faculty members hold leadership positions and are members of 40 university committees including the University Senate; the Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Life Sciences Committee; the Planning, Development, and Sustainability Committee; the Associate Deans for Graduate Studies Working Group; and the International Program Advisory Committee.
Students have input into the school’s governance through membership in the Public Health Student Association (PHSA). The PHSA serves as a liaison between the students, the SPH’s faculty and staff, and public health professionals. Students also participate in the faculty recruitment process by participating on Search Committees. Students, alumni and community partners who met with the site visit team stated that the school solicits feedback about the competencies, courses and the curriculum. Students stated that one way the school has incorporated their feedback was by adding content about different statistical software in biostatistics courses.

1.6 Fiscal Resources.

The school shall have financial resources adequate to fulfill its stated mission and goals, and its instructional, research and service objectives.

This criterion is met. The school has financial resources adequate to fulfill its stated mission and goals. The GSU president determines the portion of the state allocation to the university that is provided to the academic programs. The provost then decides the amount to be allocated to individual schools and colleges. The budget allocated to the School of Public health is adequate to support the school’s current stage of development.

The state appropriation has increased from $1.6 million in 2011 to $5.7 million in 2015. The indirect cost recovery has also increased significantly from $25,000 in 2011 to $1.6 million in 2015. This increase in the cost recovery mirrors the significant increase in external funding reported by the school, increasing from $78,816 in 2011 to nearly $14.6 million in 2015. Other smaller amounts of funding come from gifts. A total of $516,219 is allocated to student support.

Faculty salaries are funded from the state allocation to the school. The School of Public Health receives 20% of the indirect funding on grants and contracts. These funds are used for faculty support such as hiring external consultants to critique grant applications prior to submission, travel to scientific meetings and other forms of support. In addition to receiving the base-operating budget from state resources, the school has been securing additional funding by successful applications to the president’s strategic initiatives program. The school leadership has also developed a plan for significantly expanding student enrollment numbers, which would provide an additional source of funding for the school through a tuition return plan. The SPH will receive professional program differential funding for FY2015 ($70,000), based on projected student enrollment derived from historical student enrollment figures. Table 1 shows the school’s budget for the last five years.
### Table 1. Sources of Funds and Expenditures by Major Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Appropriation/University Funds</td>
<td>$1,615,869</td>
<td>$3,135,342</td>
<td>$3,698,448</td>
<td>$4,858,704</td>
<td>$5,744,751(^1)</td>
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<td>State Funded Faculty and Staff Benefits</td>
<td>$269,418</td>
<td>$394,619</td>
<td>$624,664</td>
<td>$980,993</td>
<td>$1,431,749</td>
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<td>Grants/Contracts</td>
<td>$278,816</td>
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<td>$7,320,349</td>
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<td>Indirect Cost Recovery</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$573,383</td>
<td>$1,941,357</td>
<td>$1,408,439</td>
<td>$1,605,985(^2)</td>
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<td>Tuition and Fees</td>
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<td>$33,372</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>$0(^3)</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$5,969</td>
<td>$5,969</td>
<td>$43,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,189,103</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,358,075</strong></td>
<td><strong>$13,660,787</strong></td>
<td><strong>$19,024,105</strong></td>
<td><strong>$23,486,921</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>State Funded Faculty Salaries and Benefits</td>
<td>$1,190,732</td>
<td>$1,699,184</td>
<td>$1,977,450</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Funded Staff Salaries and Benefits</td>
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<td>$219,064</td>
<td>$1,052,893</td>
<td>$1,449,144</td>
<td>$3,513,757</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>$82,000</td>
<td>$82,000</td>
<td>$612,332</td>
<td>$780,337</td>
<td>$496,522</td>
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<td>Travel(^4)</td>
<td>$0(^4)</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$31,980</td>
<td>$102,385</td>
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<td>Student Support</td>
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<td>$267,000</td>
<td>$427,040</td>
<td>$518,193</td>
<td>$516,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,532,791</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,271,248</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,101,695</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,061,046</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,176,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Includes a one-time allocation of $500,000
\(^2\) Only includes indirect cost recovery dollar amounts received from July 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015
\(^3\) SPH Tuition differential was proposed during this year, and granted in the following fiscal year
\(^4\) Travel and Operations Expenditures were not separated in FY 2012
\(^5\) Travel expense freeze due to economic downturn

### 1.7 Faculty and Other Resources.

The school shall have personnel and other resources adequate to fulfill its stated mission and goals, and its instructional, research and service objectives.

This criterion is met. The school has adequate personnel and other resources to fulfill its mission and goals in the areas of teaching, research and service. As of fall 2015, the school had 40 primary and 18 other faculty members. The biostatistics specialty area has seven primary faculty members; environmental health has six; epidemiology has seven; health policy and management has seven; and health promotion and behavior has 11.

For all concentrations except for epidemiology, the student-faculty ratios are below 10:1 and support effective and regular student/faculty interactions. As of fall 2015, the epidemiology concentration had a SFR of 13.6 based on primary faculty and 10.5 based on total faculty. Students who met with the site visit team stated that class sizes were small, the school provides sufficient resources and their professors were always available. Based on feedback from the students and faculty who met with the team, the site visit team concluded that the relatively high SFR for the epidemiology concentration did not appear to
infringe on student learning. The overall student faculty ratio is 4.9 based on primary faculty and 4.2 based on total faculty. The SFR has fluctuated over the past three years but has remained low.

The school has 84.5 FTE administrative and other staff members who provide administrative, research and technical support to the school. Based on discussions with students and faculty members, site visitors determined that the amount of support staff is adequate for current operations.

The school has 139 offices along with laboratories and classrooms located across eight buildings. It is undergoing renovations to have all classrooms and offices housed in the Urban Life Building. All faculty members have individual offices. The school has 11 conference rooms, office space for graduate assistants, a break room and a reception area for faculty and staff.

The school has sufficient classroom space for all courses. Though the school shares classroom space with other colleges on campus, it has two dedicated classrooms, five laboratories and student work areas for public health student instruction and work. Students have access to common areas such as computer labs, cubicles, study carrels and general workrooms.

The school provides computers to all faculty and staff members for office use. In all, 130 computers are provided by the school. Public health students have access to general computer labs located throughout the GSU campus and maintained by the university. The school also shares computer labs in the Urban Life Building with School of Nursing and Health Professions students.

The school has access to the university library and the College of Law library. The GSU library provides students with research assistance, state-of-the-art technology and a collection of over 28,000 electronic journals, 2,800 periodicals and newspaper titles and nearly 8,000 active serials. Additionally, the library is a federal document depository, with more than 820,000 government documents. The school also has a dedicated technology team, a librarian and access to high-performance servers. The Extreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment (XSEDE) is a virtual system that researchers can use to interactively share computing resources, grid computing and a virtual computing lab.

Because of its location in Atlanta, the school also has formal agreements with external organizations and agencies that provide opportunities for instruction, research and service such as the AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta, Aniz, Inc., ACCG Civic Affairs Foundation, Inc., AARP Georgia, American Cancer Society, BlazeSports America, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Georgia Department of Public Health, Global Services Corps, Grady Memorial Hospital, Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, International Rescue Committee, Kaiser Permanente – Georgia, MAP International and the National AIDS and Education Services for Minorities.
1.8 Diversity.

The school shall demonstrate a commitment to diversity and shall evidence an ongoing practice of cultural competence in learning, research and service practices.

This criterion is met. Both GSU and the School of Public Health express a commitment to recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff and student body. The university and school share a broadly inclusive definition of diversity, with the school formally endorsing the GSU Diversity Strategic Plan and further articulating a school diversity policy that defines four diversity goals targeting students, faculty, staff and individuals with disabilities. The university and the school have identified the following as key underrepresented groups in the GSU population: Hispanic or Latino and black or African American faculty, staff and students; and tenure-track or tenured female faculty. According to the GSU Diversity Strategic Plan, approximately 60% of GSU’s students are female, 33% identify as black, 12% identify as Asian and 46% identify as white; seven percent of students identify as Hispanic or Latino. According to 2010 US Census data, the racial and ethnic composition of the population of Georgia is 59.7% white, 30.5% black or African American, 3.2% Asian and 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native. Almost 9% identify as Hispanic or Latino. The gender breakdown of Georgians is 48.8% male and 51.2% female.

According to data from the self-study, the number of faculty and staff members from the identified underrepresented racial and ethnic groups has fluctuated over the past three years, although the school has consistently met its targets for these measures. From data received during the site visit, Hispanic or Latino (n=2) and black or African American (n=6) individuals currently comprise 20% (8 of 40) of primary faculty, and Hispanic or Latino (n=2) and black or African American (n=34) comprise 42% (36 of 85) of school staff members. The school also has a predominantly (22 of 40 or 55%) female faculty and has met its annual target regarding the number of female tenure-track and tenured faculty over the past three years. Per data received during the site visit, 37.5% (15 of 40) of faculty in tenured or tenure-track positions are women.

The school has consistently met its annual diversity target with regard to the student body composition, with Hispanic or Latino and black or African American students comprising 39.3% in 2013, a high of 44.6% in 2014 and falling slightly to 42.9% in 2015. The school also has student diversity targets related to attracting Fulbright scholars and offering study abroad opportunities, both of which have been met over the past three years.

The school follows GSU harassment and discrimination policies and procedures and follows university guidelines and procedures regarding hiring practices that foster a diverse faculty and administration, encouraging participation in university mentoring programs for underrepresented junior faculty and female associate professors. The school is also a founding member of the National Research Mentoring
Network, which fosters opportunities for faculty, staff and student researchers. According to the self-study, the school is working with the GSU associate provost to outline a concrete series of actions for the next 12 to 18 months to attract and maintain additional minority faculty and staff. During the site visit, strategies mentioned included advertising in key places and salary supplements from the university.

The school’s Academic Affairs Committee, through its curricular oversight function, ensures that course content and educational activities build students’ competence in issues of diversity and cultural considerations. With regard to recruitment of minority students, the school conducts outreach at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and professional organizations. Retention efforts are largely within the context of GSU’s extensive and successful programs for underrepresented student populations, and the school’s focus on urban health concerns likely attracts students from racially, ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

2.0 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS.

2.1 Degree Offerings.

The school shall offer instructional programs reflecting its stated mission and goals, leading to the Master of Public Health (MPH) or equivalent professional master’s degree in at least the five areas of knowledge basic to public health. The school may offer other degrees, professional and academic, and other areas of specialization, if consistent with its mission and resources.

This criterion is met. As shown in Table 2, the school offers the professional MPH degree in five concentrations and the academic PhD degree in three concentrations. The school participates in a dual degree between the Juris Doctorate (JD) and the MPH in health management and policy. The self-study notes that two additional dual degrees are in the university approval process. The school must submit a substantive change notice when these joint programs are approved; at that time they will be added to the accreditation unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Instructional Matrix</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Professional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master’s Degrees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Biostatistics</td>
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<td>MPH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Health Science</td>
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<td>MPH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
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<td>MPH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Management and Policy</td>
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<td>Health Promotion and Behavior</td>
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<td>MPH</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Doctoral Degrees</strong></td>
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<td>Epidemiology</td>
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<td>Health Promotion and Behavior</td>
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<td>Health Services and Policy Research</td>
<td>PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Joint Degrees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Management and Policy (MPH) / Law (JD)</td>
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<td>JD/MPH</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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.

This criterion is met. The school requires a minimum of 42-semester credit hours for each of the MPH concentrations. One credit is equivalent to one 50-minute session a week for 15 weeks. Most classes meet once a week for 2.5 hours for 15 weeks. No MPH student has graduated with fewer than 42 credits in the last three years.

2.3 Public Health Core Knowledge.

All graduate professional degree public health students must complete sufficient coursework to attain depth and breadth in the five core areas of public health knowledge.

This criterion is met. All MPH concentrations require that students take at least one course in each of the five core areas of public health knowledge, as shown in Table 3. Site visitors reviewed the syllabi and found that the learning objectives for these required courses contribute to the MPH core competencies and provide students with a strong foundation of public health core knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Area of Knowledge</th>
<th>Course Number and Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Promotion and Behavior</td>
<td>PH 7140: Social and Behavioral Aspects of Public Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biostatistics</td>
<td>PH 7017: Fundamentals of Biostatistics I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
<td>PH 7011: Introduction to Epidemiology OR</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PH 7711: Epidemiologic Methods I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Health Sciences</td>
<td>PH 7150: Environmental Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Management and Policy</td>
<td>PH 7160: Introduction to the Healthcare System</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Practical Skills.

All graduate professional public health degree students must develop skills in basic public health concepts and demonstrate the application of these concepts through a practice experience that is relevant to students’ areas of specialization.

This criterion is met. All MPH students are required to complete a two-credit practicum placement, consisting of 240 hours of field-based work with an in-class component. Practicum procedures and requirements are detailed in the MPH student handbooks. The practicum may be completed over one or two (consecutive) semesters. Students select sites using resources from the school’s Career Services and faculty mentors. Site appropriateness and preceptor qualifications are reviewed and approved by the practicum coordinator.
Preceptors receive a packet of information describing their role and are offered ongoing support, including a mid-point check-in email, from the practicum coordinator. Feedback from preceptors during the site visit indicated that they receive adequate guidance on their role and what students are intended to accomplish during the practicum.

Students are evaluated on their ability to demonstrate their selected, approved competencies through ongoing assessment by the practicum coordinator and at the midpoint and end of the practicum by their preceptor. Students also evaluate their practicum experience at the mid-point in conjunction with their preceptors, independently at the end, and informally throughout the experience. Each student is also required to produce a final practicum poster describing his or her project, activities undertaken, results, findings and recommendations. The practicum project may serve as the basis of the thesis or capstone project produced through the culminating experience.

A large number and variety of practicum sites are available, including local, state and federal health agencies, professional societies and nonprofit associations, health systems, academic centers and foundations.

Students and alumni spoke positively about their practicum experiences and articulated strong connections between the knowledge covered in their classes and the skills they applied in their practica. Several alumni noted that their practicum experience led to job placement, also an indicator of the success of the practicum experience for both students and host sites. Preceptors also described students as enthusiastic, professional and willing to take initiative.

The practicum experience may be waived for students possessing extensive public health experience through a formal waiver request process; these students are required to make up the two credits through an additional elective or concentration-specific course. According to data from the self-study, from 2013 to 2015, the school granted 14 waivers, representing 9% of students in 2013, 8% in 2014 and 4% in 2015. The site visit team validated the waiver process as appropriately rigorous and competency-based.

2.5 Culminating Experience.

All graduate professional degree programs, both professional public health and other professional degree programs, identified in the instructional matrix shall assure that each student demonstrates skills and integration of knowledge through a culminating experience.

This criterion is met. All students in the MPH program are required to complete a culminating experience. The school offers two options: a thesis or a capstone project. The thesis is a scholarly work that contributes to the field of knowledge in the student’s concentration along with knowledge and skills from the core courses. This is a research project that includes methods and the analysis of data and could result in a publication. The capstone is a practical experience that integrates knowledge and skills
acquired in coursework with a professional work setting. Types of projects for the capstone include a grant proposal, research report, community assessment, public health program plan, program evaluation, community intervention, analysis of a public health problem, production of a video or website for a public health program, training manuals or other applied projects.

Each student works with a faculty member who serves as the chairperson of the thesis/capstone committee. The committee must have one additional faculty member. The culminating experience is a means for students to demonstrate achievement of each of the MPH core and concentration competencies. Both options for the culminating experience include planning, carrying out the project, writing and oral defense.

The culminating experience is scored according to discipline-specific rubrics in which the faculty advisor rates the achievement of the core and concentration competencies and skills on a four-point scale from poor to excellent. Discussions with faculty members confirmed that they work with students throughout the thesis or capstone project and provide guidance along the way. Weaknesses are corrected before the end of the thesis or capstone project; faculty advisors work with students to ensure that they have achieved the competencies before moving on to the defense.

Information on the culminating process and options are available in the MPH student handbook and on the website. The student handbook details information and instructions on the thesis and capstone to describe the expectations within the MPH degree and guide on the steps and timelines for fulfilling the requirements.

2.6 Required Competencies.

For each degree program and area of specialization within each program identified in the instructional matrix, there shall be clearly stated competencies that guide the development of degree programs. The school must identify competencies for graduate professional public health, other professional and academic degree programs and specializations at all levels (bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral).

This criterion is met. The school has identified competencies that guide the development of each degree program, including 15 core MPH competencies and competencies specific to each concentration and program. The initial MPH core competencies were developed in 2007 and subsequently adopted by the faculty later that year.

The school has developed competency matrices for the MPH core competencies and each set of concentration competencies. Each matrix identifies the relationship between courses, competencies and learning outcomes and identifies primary assessment methods used in each course including the practicum and culminating experience. The MPH concentrations each have a range of four to 11 competencies. The PhD concentrations have a range of six to seven competencies each.
The development of competencies involved all faculty members and external constituents. The Leadership Team oversees and is responsible for the development of the MPH and PhD concentration competencies. In 2012, school faculty initiated a two-year process to collectively revise and update the MPH core competencies and to develop concentration competencies as well as doctoral competencies. This process began with a summer accreditation retreat on competency-driven programs of study and specifically addressed terminology, identification of competencies and assessment using resources such as Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Concentration-specific competency reviews occur annually. The director of accreditation and evaluation along with the Assessment and Evaluation Committee oversees competency review and assessment and ensures that the competencies reflect the changes occurring in the field. All faculty members discuss curricular content and the competencies each semester during faculty meetings. Examples of school-wide changes that have resulted from the revision of the competencies include the renumbering of doctoral-level courses, the hiring of a director of accreditation and assessment and revising course titles and course descriptions to more accurately describe the competency-driven learning objectives that lead to student learning outcomes.

Competencies for all degree programs are posted on the school’s website and are outlined in the course syllabi and student handbook. Students who met with the site visit team confirmed that the competencies are integrated into the curriculum and discussed regularly. Site visitors reviewed syllabi and confirmed that the competencies are clearly linked to learning objectives and mapped to course activities.

2.7 Assessment Procedures.

There shall be procedures for assessing and documenting the extent to which each professional public health, other professional and academic degree student has demonstrated achievement of the competencies defined for his or her degree program and area of concentration.

This criterion is met. The school has established procedures beyond course grades to assess students’ mastery of competencies for each degree program and concentration. The school has also identified outcome measures to evaluate student achievement and success in each program.

The school uses a rubric system to assess mastery of the competencies for all students. The rubric measures achievement of each competency on a four-point scale (poor, fair, good and excellent), and the student’s score is determined by performance on his or her course portfolio of learning experiences (quizzes, exams, assignments, projects and papers), which are all mapped to the competencies of each course. The score for the rubric and portfolio determines each student’s grade in a course. All students (including doctoral students who take core courses as prerequisites) must earn a B or better in MPH core courses. Any student who earns lower than a B must repeat the course.
The school also assesses competency attainment through the practicum. At the midpoint of the practicum course, MPH students are required to complete a Qualtrics survey to self-assess their performance and competency attainment as they progress through the practicum. Doctoral students receive annual evaluations in which they are required to discuss their progress toward competency mastery with their faculty advisor, as well as areas for improvement. These discussions inform faculty on the success of competency-based instruction methods and promote an understanding of a competency-based curriculum among students. Both MPH and doctoral students complete an evaluation of the practicum at the end of the internship. The practicum coordinator and the preceptor also evaluate the student’s performance and achievement of at least one student-selected core competency and at least one student-selected concentration competency. The practicum coordinator reviews all evaluations at the end of the practicum experience.

The school assesses competency attainment for both MPH and doctoral students through the culminating experience. Faculty members on student committees use a standard rubric (one that is standard for each concentration) to assess competency achievement of the core and concentration competencies, through the final oral defenses of the culminating experience projects and the comprehensive exam for doctoral students. The core assessment questions on the rubric are the same for all concentrations, and the concentration assessment questions on the rubric are uniform for all students within that concentration. Culminating experience rubric scores are reported to the director of accreditation and evaluation and the Assessment and Evaluation Committee. These data are reviewed annually.

The school recently implemented an exit survey that assesses student’s (both master’s and doctoral) perception of their performance and mastery of the competencies. Students are asked to rate their competency level in a variety of areas on a Likert scale.

All MPH students have a maximum allowable time of six years to graduate. The graduation rate for the 2009-2010 cohort in the MPH programs was 75%. A total of 14 students from this cohort withdrew from the program, and there are four students continuing. When students withdraw from the program, the graduate advisor contacts them to determine why they are withdrawing. Most students state that they no longer want to pursue an MPH or they have transferred to another program in the university. For 2014-2015, there are 118 continuing students in the MPH program, and one student has graduated. This cohort is on track to meet the 70% graduation threshold.

PhD students have a nine-year maximum allowable time to graduate. The PhD program began in fall 2011 with nine students: four have graduated, one withdrew and four are continuing. Given that this
cohort has not yet reached its maximum allowable time to graduate, it is still on track to achieve the required 60% threshold.

The school collects job placement data for all programs through an alumni survey. Every spring semester, the career coordinator and director of accreditation and evaluation sends a survey to all graduates from the previous calendar year. Of the 55 MPH graduates in 2014, 25 responded: 59% were employed, 21% were continuing their education and 20% were actively seeking employment. For the PhD program, three of the four graduates responded: two (67%) were employed and one (33%) was continuing his or her education.

The school conducts assessments of its graduates’ abilities to perform competencies through an employer and alumni survey. In fall 2014, the school sent a survey link to alumni and asked them to forward the survey to their employers. The school also made attempts to solicit the employer’s contact information from alumni so that the school could send the survey link directly to employers. Both attempts yielded a low response rate: two people responded. In lieu of a survey of employers, the school hosted a focus group in October 2014 with the External Board of Advisors (current and potential employers of graduates). Members of the board were asked to provide feedback on the strengths of the school’s graduates and to provide comments on areas of improvement. Board members stated that students were extremely knowledgeable about their areas of study and recommended that the school improve students’ analytical and database experience. The school has taken steps to improve employer responses by hiring a development staff person who keeps track of alumni and fosters relationships with their employers to encourage them to respond. Moving forward, the school will continue to administer the employer survey and conduct focus groups.

The alumni survey had a response rate of 45%. The survey asked alumni to rate on a 10-point scale (with 1=not at all prepared and 10=very prepared) “After completing your program, how prepared are you to perform the following in a work setting?” for each concentration area linking all the competencies to the question. Alumni who responded stated that the practicum provided the opportunity to gain real world experience prior to graduating, which has been beneficial at their current place of employment. Alumni recommended improving student’s exposure to SAS, SPSS and other statistical software. Overall alumni stated that the core courses and a few of the concentration courses (healthcare financing) prepared them for the workforce.

Employers who met with the site visit team stated that graduates from the school are professional, prepared and have the needed skill sets for the workforce.
2.8 Other Graduate Professional Degrees.

If the school offers curricula for graduate professional degrees other than the MPH or equivalent public health degrees, students pursuing them must be grounded in basic public health knowledge.

This criterion is not applicable.

2.9 Bachelor’s Degrees in Public Health.

If the school offers baccalaureate public health degrees, they shall include the following elements:

Required Coursework in Public Health Core Knowledge: students must complete courses that provide a basic understanding of the five core public health knowledge areas defined in Criterion 2.1, including one course that focuses on epidemiology. Collectively, this coursework should be at least the equivalent of 12 semester-credit hours.

Elective Public Health Coursework: in addition to the required public health core knowledge courses, students must complete additional public health-related courses. Public health-related courses may include those addressing social, economic, quantitative, geographic, educational and other issues that impact the health of populations and health disparities within and across populations.

Capstone Experience: students must complete an experience that provides opportunities to apply public health principles outside of a typical classroom setting and builds on public health coursework. This experience should be at least equivalent to three semester-credit hours or sufficient to satisfy the typical capstone requirement for a bachelor’s degree at the parent university. The experience may be tailored to students’ expected post-baccalaureate goals (e.g., graduate and/or professional school, entry-level employment), and a variety of experiences that meet university requirements may be appropriate. Acceptable capstone experiences might include one or more of the following: internship, service-learning project, senior seminar, portfolio project, research paper or honors thesis.

The required public health core coursework and capstone experience must be taught (in the case of coursework) and supervised (in the case of capstone experiences) by faculty documented in Criteria 4.1.a and 4.1.b.

This criterion is not applicable.

2.10 Other Bachelor’s Degrees.

If the school offers baccalaureate degrees in fields other than public health, students pursuing them must be grounded in basic public health knowledge.

This criterion is not applicable.

2.11 Academic Degrees.

If the school also offers curricula for graduate academic degrees, students pursuing them shall obtain a broad introduction to public health, as well as an understanding about how their discipline-based specialization contributes to achieving the goals of public health.

This criterion is met. The school offers the PhD degree in three concentrations: epidemiology, health promotion and behavior and health services and policy research. The first doctoral class enrolled in August 2011, and the program is 62 credit hours in duration.
As a prerequisite to doctoral studies, all students must complete MPH core courses in the five public health knowledge areas, including three credits of Introduction to Epidemiology or Epidemiologic Methods I (doctoral students in the epidemiology concentration are required to take the latter). Typically, these core courses are taken prior to enrollment in the doctoral program; if not, students must take the MPH courses at the start of their doctoral program, but the credits do not count toward the doctoral degree. These prerequisites ensure that all doctoral students possess a strong foundation in core public health.

Students have the ability to waive prerequisite core courses through a petition documenting completion of equivalent courses in a previous (non-MPH) graduate program. Three students have been allowed to waive the introduction to epidemiology or epidemiologic methods course; five have waived the introductory biostatistics course; one has waived the environmental health course; three have waived the healthcare organization course; and one has waived the social and behavioral health course. Courses taken at a CEPH-accredited school or program are automatically accepted as satisfying the waiver criteria. For a course taken at other institutions, the student submits the syllabus for the course, which is then evaluated by the GSU faculty member who usually teaches the course.

2.12 Doctoral Degrees.

The school shall offer at least three doctoral degree programs that are relevant to three of the five areas of basic public health knowledge.

This criterion is met. The school offers doctoral degrees in three areas, as shown in Table 2. Each division exceeds the CEPH minimum requirements for primary faculty to offer doctoral-level studies. The school has flexible admission requirements and provides adequate funding for each doctoral student to cover tuition, fees and an annual stipend. The support is renewable for up to four years. The school has established a mentoring system for doctoral students and provides an array of other student support services. Students are also exposed to a doctoral-level practicum and have access to biostatistical and instructional effectiveness sessions and other research and administrative support.

All PhD students are required to complete four core courses (a total of 18 credit hours). The core courses are designed to build a more advanced knowledge base in public health and include Epidemiologic Methods II; Theory and Practice in Health and Promotion; Advanced Research Methods; Public Health Ethics and Biostatistics Methods I and II. Each concentration requires an additional 27 credit hours of concentration-specific coursework and electives. The majority of doctoral courses are 8000 or 9000 level; 900-level courses are open to doctoral students only, but MPH students are allowed to enroll in some 800-level courses. Doctoral students have additional competency-based requirements to ensure an appropriate level of scholarly rigor, in the courses that are also open to MPH students. The growing
selection of courses within each concentration affords students sufficient academic opportunity in their focus area.

All PhD students complete a practicum, which may be teaching-, research- or practice-based, a doctoral comprehensive examination and a dissertation, which may be in the traditional (thesis) or European (manuscript) format. Most students select the three-paper approach to the dissertation. Students must pass their comprehensive examination (maximum of two attempts allowed) prior to submitting their dissertation proposal. The qualifying examination consists of one section that covers core material, a second section that covers statistical methods and a third section that covers the research area that the student expects to address in the dissertation. The second and third sections are given as a take-home examination, which students have one week to complete. Every effort is made to track the competencies to the examination process and to the dissertation. These requirements provide an adequate level of rigor to evaluate students’ knowledge and abilities.

Currently, there a total of 15 students enrolled in the epidemiology concentration (six students advanced to candidacy), 11 enrolled in the health promotion and behavior concentration (three students advanced to candidacy) and three in the health services and policy research concentration (one student advanced to candidacy). Although the number of doctoral students enrolled and graduated thus far is small, there is clearly room for future growth in the doctoral program. The significant increase in external funding will also serve the doctoral program by providing a wide array of research opportunities.

2.13 Joint Degrees.

If the school offers joint degree programs, the required curriculum for the professional public health degree shall be equivalent to that required for a separate public health degree.

This criterion is met. The school offers a JD/MPH program, as shown in Table 2. The Division of Health Management and Policy has an agreement to offer the MPH in this concentration area with the JD offered by the College of Law. The collaboration allows students to complete both degree requirements in a shortened time period. The five MPH core courses, the MPH research methods course, two MPH health policy and management courses, the MPH thesis or capstone course and the public health practicum are required (total of 28 credits) to earn this MPH degree. Joint degree students earn the remaining 14 credits toward the MPH degree from College of Law electives such as health law: quality and access; public health law; a health law writing course; and health law: financing and delivery.

Public health faculty work closely with law faculty to ensure that joint degree students attain the same competencies as standalone MPH students. All of the law courses that students can substitute for public health courses, have been pre-approved. For example, the LAW 7240: Health Law: Financing and
Delivery course can be substituted for PH 8250: Health Economics and Policy; the public health competencies that have been mapped to PH 8250 also appear on the syllabus for LAW 7240.

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 completes the course and degree and receives academic credit.

This criterion is not applicable.

3.0 CREATION, APPLICATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.

3.1 Research.

The school shall pursue an active research program, consistent with its mission, through which its faculty and students contribute to the knowledge base of the public health disciplines, including research directed at improving the practice of public health.

This criterion is met. The school has made significant strides in the amount of external funding received to help support its research agenda. The external funding has increased from $278,816 in 2011 to nearly $14.6 million in 2015. External funding tends to be concentrated among 13 of the 40 primary faculty members, with faculty from the divisions of epidemiology, health management and policy and health behavior and promotion making the largest contributions. The concentration of external funding in the three divisions with existing doctoral degree programs clearly provides research opportunities for PhD students.

Faculty members have identified target areas for the school’s research activities including aging, chronic and infectious diseases, tobacco control and substance abuse. Centers have been formed to address several of these target areas including the Tobacco Center of Regulatory Science, the Mark Chaffin Center for Healthy Development, the Center of Excellence on Health Disparities Research and other centers related to community and urban health issues. A number of community-based programs are in progress aimed at minimizing viral infections, preventing sexual assaults and child abuse and tracking urban health indicators. University-sponsored programs provide seed money grants for school faculty.
Faculty members in the school also collaborate with other academic departments across the university, other colleges and universities across the state of Georgia and various community groups. A grant from the National Center on Minority Health and Disparities has provided opportunities to support and involve graduate students to serve as fellows for grant-related projects.

The school’s leadership is aware of the need to mentor young faculty with particular emphasis on scholarship, research and external funding. The school is planning to extend the mentoring program that exists in the Division of Environmental Health Sciences to the other divisions. In the meantime, faculty members complete an annual report that the division director reviews with the junior faculty member concerning areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. Tenure-track faculty members also undergo a more intensive review in the third year of their appointment.

### 3.2 Service.

The school shall pursue active service activities, consistent with its mission, through which faculty and students contribute to the advancement of public health practice.

This criterion is met. School faculty members are actively engaged in a diverse spectrum of professional and community service activities. The types of activities vary, however nearly 65% of those included in the self-study are serving as a peer reviewer or serving on a board or committee. Students participate in 22% (51/245) of faculty service projects. Although the school struggled in 2012 and 2013 to meet faculty service targets, outcomes have risen steadily since then.

All school faculty members are expected to participate in service activities. Service is one of three components that contribute to the annual evaluation of tenure-track and tenured faculty. Non-tenure-track faculty are also expected to participate in service and are similarly evaluated on the three components of instruction (teaching), scholarship (research) and service, although their relative participation in each component may vary according to responsibilities and job duties. For promotion and tenure review, service contributions are documented on each candidate’s dossier and are rated as good, very good or excellent, using defined criteria.

During the site visit, faculty noted the challenges of quantifying service activities and gave numerous examples that involved faculty, students and community members, such as the Beltway Project, which monitors air quality in real time to assess the health impacts in the Atlanta neighborhoods through which the beltway runs. Faculty also discussed research projects with community engagement cores that have a service component, such as a project focused on increasing mammography rates among African American lesbian women in Atlanta.

Feedback from community stakeholders revealed numerous examples of successful academic-community partnerships addressing local public health issues on topics ranging from HIV/AIDS to infant
mortality to environmental health. Community stakeholders also noted that faculty were true partners with the community and that they were accessible and passionate about serving the community rather than benefitting from their partnerships with community organizations. One stakeholder stressed what an asset the university is to the city and that as an urban state institution, it truly addresses the issues in the local community.

The Mark Chaffin Center for Healthy Development and Center for Leadership in Disability also contribute to the school’s service mission. For example, site visitors learned that the former supports statewide education and advocacy efforts related to developmental disabilities, and the latter provides family support and direct services in each of Georgia’s 19 health districts.

The school does not require or track individual student participation in service activities. Rather, the outcome measure quantifies activities conducted by public health student organizations. According to the self-study, the Public Health Student Association is the primary organizer of student service activities with 15 sample activities listed. Also, many of the service activities listed in the self-study include student participation. The school has consistently met its relatively modest target, which suggests that it might consider increasing it or developing an outcome measures that better quantifies the level and type of student involvement in service activities.

3.3 Workforce Development.

The school shall engage in activities other than its offering of degree programs that support the professional development of the public health workforce.

This criterion is met. From 2010 to 2013, the school collaborated with the University of Georgia College of Public Health and the universities that comprise the Administrative Committee on Public Health (ACOPH) on the Georgia Public Health Training Center. Since the dissolution of the Georgia Public Health Training Center, data from the self-study indicate that school faculty have conducted 54 public health continuing education offerings, serving approximately 7,822 individuals. Seventy-four percent (40/54) of the programs were community-based, and 17% (9/54) were offered in a distance-learning format. Some of these programs were offered through the Center for Healthy Development and the Center for Leadership in Disability, which also support the professional development of the public health workforce through interdisciplinary professional conferences, direct trainings and research that informs evidence-based practice.

The school has collaborated with the CDC and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors to develop an online continuing education program that is being offered to a pilot group of state and local health department employees with plans to make the curriculum available more broadly as a paid offering in the future. The curriculum was informed by a 2011 nationally representative convenience sample
survey of the chronic disease workforce in state and local health departments regarding their professional training needs.

The school offers a 16-credit graduate certificate in public health designed for individuals in the current workforce looking to maintain, upgrade or advance their public health knowledge and skills. It provides exposure to the core public health areas of epidemiology, biostatistics and healthcare systems. Non-degree students who hold a graduate degree or have been accepted into a graduate program but are not actively enrolled can take up to nine credit hours, and certificate students who subsequently enter the MPH or PhD programs can apply credits that meet the degree requirements. According to data provided in the self-study, the school has had 27 certificate and 17 non-degree students from 2012 to 2015.

The site visit team noted the lack of an ongoing process for assessing the needs of the workforce. Though the school offers continuing education opportunities, there had been no attempt to conduct a workforce needs assessment since the discontinuation of the Georgia Public Health Training Center. After receiving the site visit team’s draft report, the school has advanced a robust workforce development agenda. A Workforce Development Working Group was established; a needs assessment has been conducted with a key constituent partner (the Georgia Public Health Association); and a plan developed. Faculty endorsed the plan, including creating a standing Workforce Development Committee to address these needs in a comprehensive fashion going forward.

**4.0 FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS.**

4.1 Faculty Qualifications.

The school shall have a clearly defined faculty which, by virtue of its distribution, multidisciplinary nature, educational preparation, practice experience and research and instructional competence, is able to fully support the school’s mission, goals and objectives.

This criterion is met. The school is supported by faculty members who have the educational preparation, practice experience and research and instructional competence necessary to maintain a school of public health. The education and training of the full-time faculty is adequate to cover teaching and mentoring in the five core areas. All primary faculty members hold PhD, MD-MPH or DrPH degrees in various areas related to the public health core areas. The school had five active faculty searches at the time of the site visit.

All faculty members in the Division of Biostatistics have PhDs in biostatistics, statistics or clinical psychology, with an emphasis on statistical methods. Division of Environmental Health faculty members have doctoral-level training in environmental sciences, environmental engineering and human physiology. All of the Division of Epidemiology faculty members have training directly related to the discipline. Faculty members in the Division of Health Management and Policy have completed doctoral-level training in an
array of appropriate and related areas. Faculty in the Division of Health Behavior and Promotion have
doctoral-level training that is heavily concentrated in psychology and counseling, and a smaller number
are trained in sociology, health promotion and health education.

The school has a large number of secondary faculty members who have the qualifications to contribute to
its academic and scholarly activities.

The school integrates perspectives from the field by hiring public health practitioners as part-time
instructors, inviting practitioners to serve as guest lecturers and taking students to tour public health
facilities as part of the coursework. The school’s primary faculty complement also brings experiences in
public health service and leadership; some have held senior positions in healthcare agencies, non-profit
organizations, government institutions and international agencies.

Students who met with the site visit team spoke highly of the faculty and expressed satisfaction with their
professors’ abilities to deliver content in a way that they could understand.

4.2 Faculty Policies and Procedures.

The school shall have well-defined policies and procedures to recruit, appoint and promote
qualified faculty, to evaluate competence and performance of faculty, and to support the
professional development and advancement of faculty.

This criterion is met. The GSU faculty handbook provides well-defined policies and procedures for faculty
recruiting, appointment and promotion of qualified faculty. The university’s Center for Instructional
Effectiveness provides full-time and adjunct faculty, as well as teaching assistants, with training courses
designed to increase instructional effectiveness. Faculty members also have access to services provided
by the Center for Instructional Innovation and the Research Services and Administration Education and
Training Program. Additional support services are provided by faculty mentoring grants, the Cleon C.
Arrington Research Initiation grant, the Office of Finance and Administration Trainings, new faculty
orientation programs and faculty development seminars. Similar support programs are also provided
within the school.

Faculty members are evaluated through annual reviews and promotion and tenure procedures, which are
documented in the faculty handbook and the GSU Promotion and Tenure Manual for Tenured and
Tenure-Track Professors. The faculty handbook provides a structure for student evaluation of all faculty in
all courses. This structure addresses form, frequency, use and administration of evaluations. The
associate dean of faculty development reviews all student course evaluations each semester, and sends
letters of congratulations to all faculty members receiving 4 out of 5 or above. The associate dean
contacts division directors to facilitate discussions with low scoring faculty, and personally attends classes
to offer feedback on improving lecture and pedagogy.
4.3 Student Recruitment and Admissions.

The school shall have student recruitment and admissions policies and procedures designed to locate and select qualified individuals capable of taking advantage of the school's various learning activities, which will enable each of them to develop competence for a career in public health.

This criterion is met. The school has student recruitment and admissions policies and procedures in place. Recruitment activities are coordinated among the admissions coordinator, director of communications and director of development. The admission coordinator serves as the contact to all prospective students throughout the recruitment and admissions process; she attends graduate fairs and other recruitment events. The director of communications develops the marketing and recruitment materials and supports social media outreach. The director of development seeks financial support for scholarships and stipends to attract and retain graduate students.

The admissions process requires that students submit a resume, an official transcript, GRE scores, three letters of recommendations and a statement of professional intent. The TOEFL or IELTS is required for non-native English speakers. The school does not have established minimal GPA or GRE scores for admission. In discussions with faculty, minimal GPA or GRE scores are not set to encourage disadvantaged students to apply. Applications are reviewed in their totality and do not depend on a single measure. While no minimal scores are established, the students who enrolled over the last three years have had an average GPA of 3.1 to 3.2 and GRE scores in the following range: 42nd to 55th percentile for verbal and 35th to 46th percentile for quantitative.

In the MPH program, applications have increased from 305 in 2013 to 496 in 2015 (a 63% increase). The number accepted increased over this time with a 54% to 59% acceptance rate. While the number of new enrollees rose from 109 in 2013 to 128 in 2015, the yield decreased from 66% in 2013 to 43% in 2015. Enrolled students are unevenly distributed across divisions; the largest numbers of students enroll in epidemiology followed by health promotion and behavior and health management and policy. However, all divisions are viable and growing.

Discussions with the dean and other school leaders indicated that the pool of prospective students is strong in the Atlanta area. Atlanta is the center of much public health activity with the CDC, American Cancer Society, CARE and other public health-oriented nonprofits and companies nearby. Many of the employees of these organizations and agencies do not have degrees or other formal training in public health. As a public university with reasonable tuition, the school expects to attract those seeking an MPH and forecasts continued growth for the foreseeable future.
4.4 Advising and Career Counseling.

There shall be available a clearly explained and accessible academic advising system for students, as well as readily available career and placement advice.

This criterion is met. The school has a clearly explained and accessible academic advising system and readily available career counseling services. All MPH and certificate students receive administrative guidance from the school’s graduate advisor. Students are not assigned a faculty advisor but are encouraged to develop multiple mentoring relationships. The student handbooks outline the student’s responsibilities as an advisee. The school’s graduate advisor follows up with students to confirm that they are establishing mentoring relationships and offers suggestions and facilitates introductions if students need such support. Some divisions offer speed mentoring activities to expose students to a large number of potential mentors in a single setting. Staff members in the Office of Academic Assistance and Career Services communicate with faculty about mentoring needs and responsibilities.

Students who met with the site visit team were very complimentary of the support offered by the graduate advisor, and they related many examples of strong faculty mentoring relationships that had grown organically. Students also stated that compared with their experiences at other institutions and in other programs at the university, the school does an excellent job of creating a culture of inclusion and providing professional services.

PhD students are assigned a faculty advisor/mentor based on mutual research interests; advising procedures and responsibilities are outlined in the PhD student handbook. Doctoral students are required to meet at least once annually with their advisor. The doctoral program coordinator orients doctoral faculty advisors.

The school provides career support and leadership development services for students and alumni via the career planning handbook, new student orientation, career events and workshops and individual support from the school’s career coordinator. All new MPH students complete a career gap analysis. Doctoral students also receive career advising from their faculty advisor and faculty mentors. Online career resources available to all students include a career and practicum listserv and LinkedIn page. The school also provides advising for international students, faculty and researchers, their dependents and others through International Student and Scholar Services and Advising. Beyond the school, the university’s Career Services supports all GSU students through career fairs for non-profit/government jobs in the fall semester and health professions in the spring semester.

Student satisfaction with advising and career counseling services is assessed through questions on the school’s exit self-assessment (started in 2014) and the GSU exit survey administered to all recent graduates from graduate programs. On the exit self-assessment, students rate academic advising from
the school’s Office of Academic Assistance and Career Services an average score of 7.83 (out of 10) and academic mentoring from school faculty members and instructors an average score of 7.51.

Public health students rated career counseling from the Office of Academic Assistance and Career Services an average score of 7.50 and career mentoring from school faculty members and instructors an average score of 7.24. On the GSU exit survey, recent graduates rated the School of Public Health a mean score of 4.19 (out of 6) for academic advisement in their major department, which is slightly lower that the GSU mean of 4.49. Likewise, only 77.3% of public health students rated the level of career preparation students’ major program provided them as either good or excellent, compared with 82.4% of university graduates on the GSU Graduation Clearance Survey. During the site visit, students and alumni noted that support in this area has improved significantly. Students mentioned that the practicum coordinator provides career counseling resources such as resume building workshops and individual resume help, and has done a good job of connecting alumni with the students in a mentoring effort.

The school follows university policies and procedures on student feedback and communication of student concerns. These procedures are detailed in a variety of resources, including the GSU Student Code of Conduct, the GSU Graduate Catalogue and the School of Public Health student handbooks and are addressed during MPH new student orientation. No student complaints were filed in 2012-2013; and one was filed each year in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. The site visit team confirmed that all complaints have been resolved.
Wednesday, December 2, 2015

9:30 am  Meeting with School Leadership Team
Michael Eriksen
Aimee Ahmed
Fred Grant
John Lutzker
Rodney Lyn
S. Ike Okosun
Lindy Parker
Terry Pechacek
Laura Salazar
Shannon Self-Brown
Stuart Shalat
Christine Stauber
Denise Goveia
Anna Varela
Dan Whitaker

10:45 am  Break

10:30 am  Meeting with Self-Study Committee
Michael Eriksen
Fred Grant
John Lutzker
Rodney Lyn
Lindy Parker
Laura Salazar
Denise Goveia

11:45 am  Break

12:00 pm  Lunch with Students and Alumni
Jessica Rogers-Brown
Michael Bryan
Ban Majeed
Iris Feinberg
Emilia Pasalic
Nick Johnson
Amanda Powell
Gitangali Baroi
Joell Atere-Roberts
Samantha Bourque
Amanda Parker
Oluwatoyin Adedapo-Jimoh
Tenzin Donchung
Amanda ilcox
Justin Davis
Ichhya Pant
Brian Carter
Brandon Talley

1:30 pm  Break

1:45 pm  Meeting with University Leadership
Mark Becker
Timothy Renick
2:15 pm  Executive Session

3:00 pm  Meeting with Faculty and Key Staff Related to Faculty Issues, Student Recruitment, Advising
Denise Goveia
Fred Grant
Matt Hyat
Betty Lai
John Lutzker
Gina Maddox-Sample
Katherine Masyn
Jessica Pratt
Lynette Reid

4:00 pm  Break and Executive Session

5:30 pm  Adjourn

Thursday, December 3, 2015

8:30 am  Meeting with Instructional Programs Group 1
Rodney Lyn
Gina Maddox-Sample
Katherine Masyn
S. Ike Okosun
Lindy Parker
Terry Pechacek
Laura Salazar
Jessica Pratt
Shannon Self-Brown
Stuart Shalat
Christine Stauber
Denise Goveia
Dan Whitaker

9:45 am  Break

10:00 am  Meeting with Instructional Programs Group 2
Rodney Lyn
Katherine Masyn
S. Ike Okosun
Lindy Parker
Terry Pechacek
Shannon Self-Brown
Denise Goveia
Dan Whitaker

11:15 am  Executive Session

12:00 pm  Lunch with the External Board of Advisors (also serve as preceptors and employers of alumni)
Rosetta Dubois-Gadson
Karin Elliott
Merrilee Gober
Marshall Kreuter
Candace Meadows
Ashley Edwards Moore
Ashley Morris
Gary D. Nelson
Maressa Pendermon
Jana Thomas
Shannon F. Woodis
Yomi Nobi

1:30 pm  Break

1:45 pm  Meeting with Faculty Related to Research, Service, Workforce Development
Daniel Crimmins
Emily Graybill
Matt Hayat
Betty Lai
John Lutzker
Katherine Masyn
S. Ike Okosun
Richard Rothenberg
Laura Salazar
Shannon Self-Brown
Jenelle Shanley
Stuart Shalat
Denise Goveia
Dan Whitaker

3:00 pm  Break
3:15 pm  Executive Session
5:00 pm  Adjourn

**Friday, December 4, 2015**

8:30 am  Executive Session and Report Preparation
12:30 am  Exit Interview