



**Boston University** School of Public Health  
Department of Global Health

## **Culminating Experience Guidelines:**

*Options, Deadlines, Forms, and Everything Else You Need to Know about  
Fulfilling the Last Requirement for the MPH*

**Academic Year 2016-2017**  
(Revised June 2016)

---

# Table of Contents

---

<b>1. Overview of GH Culminating Experience Requirement</b>	<b>2</b>
Learning Objectives	
Approval Process	
Steps to Complete the GH Culminating Experience	
Quality Standards and the CE Advisor's Role	
Student Responsibility	
Special Academic Programs	
Incomplete Policy for the GH CE	
<b>2. Options for completing the GH Culminating Experience Requirement</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Option 1: Policy Analysis</b>	<b>5</b>
Deadlines	
PPS Checklist	
PPS Template	
<b>Option 2: Journal Article</b>	<b>7</b>
Deadlines	
Proposal Checklist	
Proposal Template	
<b>Option 3: Independent Project</b>	<b>9</b>
Deadlines	
Proposal Checklist	
Proposal Template	
<b>3. Frequently Asked Questions</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4. Checklist for Final CEs</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5. Rubric for Assessing CEs</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>6. Structuring Your Policy Analysis</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>7. Appendix A: CE Forms</b>	<b>19</b>
CE Completion Contract Fall 2016	
CE Completion Contract Spring 2017	
CE Completion Contract Summer 2017	
CE Cover Page	

**Section****1****Overview of the GH Culminating Experience Requirement**

All students must complete a culminating experience (CE). The CE provides students with an opportunity to **synthesize** and **integrate** core public health skills taught in the International Health curriculum. The Department offers three options for completing the culminating experience: a policy analysis, a journal article, and an independent project. MPH/MBA students should consult their advisor for program specific requirements.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THE CULMINATING EXPERIENCE**

Upon completion of the CE, GH concentrators will be able to:

1. Synthesize background information gathered using primary and secondary sources, either from a practice partner site or as part of a public health research activity, on a problem of public health interest.
2. Drawing from knowledge, theories, and skills learned during course work, analyze a public health problem, identify causal factors, and explain their inter-relationships.
3. Identify a specific audience and tailor communication accordingly.
4. Explain how a problem should be addressed, and causal factors either mitigated or prevented, through a proposed intervention or course of proposed action.
5. Define strengths and weaknesses of a chosen strategy, compared to other alternatives, previous practice, evidence, or identified “best” practice, taking into account feasibility, cost, cultural appropriateness, etc.

**THE APPROVAL PROCESS**

Students may begin their CE after they have completed 25 credit hours. Students must choose a CE advisor to work with throughout the semester; for most students, this will be your academic advisor. If you decide to work with a GH Faculty member who is not your academic advisor, be sure to let your academic advisor know. For students enrolling in GH 777 to complete the CE, the instructors will be your CE advisors.

Approval for a CE will not be given for work that has been previously completed. Students should seek approval prior to beginning work on their chosen option. While students may base their CE on previous work, the CE paper or project must be substantially new work and not a revision or rewrite of previous work.

All written work will involve a multi-draft process. Most students write and submit three drafts to their CE advisor for comments and suggestions. A fourth version is often necessary to complete the paper or project. In order to successfully complete the culminating experience, the student must demonstrate application of a broad range of core skills from across the curriculum and synthesis and integration of knowledge.

**STEPS TO COMPLETE THE GH CULMINATING EXPERIENCE*****Semester before the Culminating Experience:***

- **Read the CE Guidelines.** This document will give you an overview of the requirements and deadlines. Each CE Option has specific deadlines and forms for which students are responsible. You have the option to follow the CE guidelines from the year you matriculated or for the current year.
- Additionally, you are encouraged to check out the [CE Examples](#) and the [CE FAQ page](#) posted on the GH Blast website.

- It is important to **talk with your advisor** well in advance of deadlines to let them know that you intend to work on your CE with them. GH Faculty members are often traveling and have many teaching and research commitments, so it may take up to a week for you to receive a response. Please **DO NOT** email them for the first time the day before your paperwork is due. **Start early and communicate frequently.**
- **All students working on their CE are required to register for the CE.** If you are planning to register to take the CE for 0 credits, sign up for GH950 through web-based registration. If you are planning to register to take the CE for either 1 or 2 credits, sign up for GH943. Students taking GH777 do not need to register for any additional course. To register for GH943, please complete two forms and submit them together to the SPH registrar's office.
  1. A directed study proposal form with the GH faculty member supervising your CE; you both sign this form.
  2. An add/drop form to add the directed study to your schedule; only you need sign this form.

The forms are available for download at <http://www.bu.edu/sph/students/resources/forms/>.

#### *Beginning of Semester of the Culminating Experience:*

- Complete a **CE Completion Contract** for the semester. If you started your CE in a previous semester and wish to continue work into the subsequent semester, you will need to submit a new CE contract. Contracts ought to be signed by you and your advisor, but if your advisor is unable to sign the contract, you may forward an email indicating their willingness to work with you to the GH Program Manager. Either option is fine.
- Depending on your CE Option, complete either a **Problem Purpose Statement** or a **Project Proposal**. Examples of a PPS and a Project Proposal are available on the GH Blast.
- Complete the online [Request to Complete CE Form](#). You may upload your CE Completion Contract and Problem Purpose Statement/Project Proposal at the end of the online form.

#### *End of Semester of the Culminating Experience:*

- Forward your advisor's **approval email** to the Program Manager, or ask your advisor to CC the Program Manager when sending it to you. If you are taking your CE for credit, be sure to check that your advisor has entered a grade for your work.
- Update your **CV/resume**.
- Complete a [CE Cover Sheet](#).
- Complete the online [Submission of CE Form](#). You may upload your completed CE with cover sheet and your CV at the end of the online form.

If you have any trouble with the online form, you are welcome to submit documentation in person or by email to the GH Program Manager. Students have up to 2 semesters to complete the CE. If you have not completed the CE by the end of the semester it is started, you must register for GH951 (a zero credit one-time CE extension) in the subsequent semester to continue working on the CE as necessary.

### **QUALITY STANDARDS AND CE ADVISOR'S ROLE**

In order to complete the CE, all GH concentrators must demonstrate application of a broad range of core skills from across the curriculum and synthesis and integration of knowledge. Final papers (Options 1 & 2) will only be approved if they have met this standard of high quality, graduate-level, analytic writing. Independent projects (Option 3) will receive approval once they have fulfilled the objectives defined in the project proposal and represent high quality graduate work. Please note that proposals for Options 2 and 3 must be approved before they are reviewed by the GH Curriculum Committee. The same high quality standards are expected of all culminating projects, whether they are credit-bearing or not.

All papers must be cited appropriately, using either American Psychological Association (APA) formatting (author, year) or Vancouver numbering system (also known as the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Medical Journals). **We strongly encourage all students to learn to use Zotero (<http://www.zotero.org/>), Mendeley (<http://www.mendeley.com/>) or another bibliographic software program.** Zotero and Mendeley are open-source programs that you can download to your computer and also use online.

Your first draft of the culminating experience paper should fully develop your argument so that your advisor can give a substantial critique. Your draft should generally follow the outline for the paper (submitted with your problem/purpose statement), although you may decide to change the order of sections, or add or subtract sections, as you develop your argument. In most cases, the first draft will include an introduction and rationale for why this is an important problem (working from your original problem or purpose statement, refined based on what you have already discovered in researching and writing the first draft); important background information on the country, program, or health issue being addressed; analysis of relevant literature which supports your choice of one or more options being analyzed as potential solutions to the problem; and recommendations for what should be done. Each of these sections should be as developed as possible: the fact that this is a “first draft” does not mean it is a partial or incomplete draft. At the same time, we recognize that you may have areas where you are uncertain about the best way to present information, or where you are still trying to find more evidence or support for your argument. It is appropriate to either insert comments into the text to flag your concerns or gaps in the argument, or to write a cover note to your advisor to specifically ask for advice in the sections which are giving you trouble. Finally, your first draft should include citations in text, and a list of references at the back of the document. It is a good habit to use a reference manager software (Mendeley or similar), so that the references are automatically formatted in a standard presentation (e.g. author-date style).

CE advisors will read and comment on 3 drafts of a paper. If the third draft is close to being done but still needs some work, the advisor may ask for a fourth and final draft. CE advisors will not read more than 4 drafts. The third draft should only be submitted to your advisor once it is as close to a final product as you can make it (meaning all citations should be in place, all sections completed, abstract attached, text copy-edited, etc.)

Occasionally, CEs need more than the standard 3-4 drafts because they do not yet meet masters-level qualifications. In this event, your CE advisor will decide on a course of action in consultation with Rich Feeley, the DGH Chair.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

---

Students should meet and/or correspond regularly with their CE advisor to provide progress updates. Advisors will provide feedback on each draft submitted. Subsequent revisions must fully address faculty concerns. A student may choose not to follow through on a suggestion made by the CE advisor, but should note his/her rationale in a note in the draft, in an email, or in discussion. Questions about faculty feedback should be clarified with the CE advisor. Students are responsible for staying in touch with CE advisors. Deadlines missed without prior advisor consent may jeopardize finishing the CE in time for graduation.

## STUDENTS ENROLLED IN TANZANIA & MEXICO FIELD COURSES, MI PROGRAM, MS/MPH OR MPH/MD PROGRAM

---

If you are leaving Boston for an extended period of time or are on a tight schedule to graduate because you are joining another academic program, we strongly suggest that you complete your CE before you leave Boston. For example, if you have been accepted to medical school and are planning to do the Kenya program, you should complete the CE before you leave for Kenya. Other students who should complete the CE prior to your practicum and/or before leaving Boston include those enrolled in:

- Masters International Peace Corps Program
- Graduate Program in Medical Sciences

**INCOMPLETE POLICY FOR THE GH CULMINATING EXPERIENCE**

---

Most CEs can and should be completed within one semester; sticking to deadlines posted in the CE contract will facilitate this. At most, you may take 1 additional semester to complete an unfinished CE. Students who require a second semester to complete the CE must register for GH951 (a zero credit one-time CE extension) to continue working on the CE and can request an Incomplete (“I”) grade for one semester. This will be subject to the Grading Policy available at [sph.bu.edu/registrar/policies](http://sph.bu.edu/registrar/policies). If, after the second semester, the CE is not completed, the incomplete grade will be converted to an F.

International students must be in compliance with visa regulations and any student who will not finish his/her CE by posted deadlines should speak with the Program Manager as soon as possible.

Students who want to finish the CE after 2 semesters of work must petition the GH department to complete the CE. The petition must include a work plan for finishing the requirement within one semester and if the petition is granted, the student must register for a 1-credit directed study. The CE must be finished within the time period indicated in the work plan.

# Section 2

## Options for Completing the GH Culminating Experience Requirement

### OPTION 1— POLICY ANALYSIS

---

This option can be taken for 0, 1, or 2 credits. All students must register for the CE (GH 950 for 0 credits; GH 943 for 1 or 2 credits). Alternatively, students may elect to enroll in GH777 (2cr), a writing workshop in which students work on their policy analysis (Option 1) throughout the semester. In GH777, all drafts of the paper are commented on and approved by the course co-instructors. The same high quality standards are expected of all CEs, regardless of whether they are credit-bearing or not.

The policy analysis usually addresses a public health or management problem observed during the practicum. Students should focus on a policy or program-related issue relevant to an identified host organization or a set of policy makers, gather and analyze background information and evidence, and propose recommendations. You are strongly encouraged to base your CE on your practicum, but students may choose a topic not related to their practicum with the approval of their CE advisor.

- The policy analysis should be approximately 12-20 pages (double-spaced). Length is determined by the scope of the question and the needs of the audience.
- Ideally, the analysis will fill a need expressed by the organization and will be delivered to them upon completion.
- **As you prepare for your practicum**, keep this option in mind and consult with your field supervisor or another relevant person in the organization about policy issues they would like you to explore in your culminating experience.
- **If you've already done your practicum** and are still in touch with your contacts, you can ask what sort of policy analysis would be useful to them.
- In some cases, students identify organizational/policy problems during their field experience that they want to explore but do not feel will be well-received by the organization. This exercise will give you practice in communicating potentially unwelcome or controversial analysis diplomatically and constructively. However, the decision about whether or not to submit the analysis to the organization is up to you.
- In the event you are unable to base your CE on the practicum, you may propose another policy analysis in consultation with the CE advisor. Students completing a CE based on the practicum cannot complete their CE in the same semester as their practicum. For students not basing the CE on the practicum, it may be possible to complete both in the same semester. This will be at the discretion of your CE advisor, who will gauge the scope of each to determine feasibility.

**All students completing this option** must submit a brief problem purpose statement (PPS) which addresses the significance of the topic and the primary resources you will be using, a working outline, and a bibliography by the deadline listed below (see below for PPS template).

See page 16 for details about structuring a Policy Analysis. Examples of CE Policy Analyses by GH alumni are available on the GH Blast website under the CE tab: <http://www.bu.edu/GHblast/GH-ce/examples/>.

---

**OPTION 1 DEADLINES**


---

**The deadlines for submitting the PPS and final drafts are hard deadlines.** Both may be submitted earlier but not later than the indicated date. Deadlines for the 3 intermediate drafts are guidelines and can be determined in consultation with your CE advisor. A work plan for submitting the intermediate drafts *must* accompany your proposal. Once you have agreed on a work plan with your advisor, you can only change deadlines with the consent of your CE advisor. ***Your paper will be final when your CE advisor agrees that it is done. Most papers need 3 drafts, but sometimes more are necessary.***

<b>Fall 2016 Graduation</b> PPS & CE Contract: <b>Sept. 14</b> Draft 1: October 7 Draft 2: November 4 Draft 3: December 2 Final Draft: <b>December 16</b>	<b>Spring 2017 Graduation</b> PPS & CE Contract: <b>Jan. 27</b> Draft 1: February 17 Draft 2: March 17 Draft 3: April 17 Final Draft: <b>April 28</b>	<b>Summer 2017 Graduation</b> PPS & CE Contract: <b>May 19</b> Draft 1: June 2 Draft 2: June 30 Draft 3: August 4 Final Draft: <b>August 16</b>
--	--	--

---

**OPTION 1 PPS CHECKLIST**


---

Use the outline below as the template for your PPS, adding whatever other information you feel is necessary. For helpful information on completing your PPS please see the GH Blast CE tab.

**Checklist:**

- Set up a meeting with your advisor or faculty mentor to discuss your topic and work plan for finishing your paper and to discuss topic possibilities. **Or**, register for GH777.
- Copy and paste the template below into a new document and start filling it in.
- If you are not taking GH777, submit your PPS to your CE advisor.
- If you are taking GH777, submit your PPS to teaching faculty. (The deadlines for students enrolled in GH777 may differ from those given here.)

---

**OPTION 1 PROBLEM PURPOSE STATEMENT TEMPLATE**


---

Name:

Advisor:

Title:

Organization:

## I. Problem and Purpose (1 paragraph)

- Define the policy question you will be exploring and your objective for the analysis
- Explain the significance of the topic
- Identify the resources you will be using
- Identify your audience

## II. Working Outline: (as detailed as possible)

III. Work Plan for Submitting Drafts: (Do not complete this section if you are enrolled in GH777.)

IV. Working Bibliography: (approximately 15 to start with)



---

**OPTION 2—JOURNAL ARTICLE**


---

Students doing an Option 2 CE will be required to register for this option as a 2-credit directed study (GH943). Please note that Option 2 CEs often take more than 1 semester to complete. In this option, the student will develop and submit a manuscript to an academic journal for publication. The Department will issue a call for submission three times a year to accommodate the January, May, and September graduation cycles. In response to the call for submission, students will submit well-written paper proposals consisting of a Problem Purpose Statement, an outline of the intended analytical methods, details about the data set to be used, and a timeline for completion. A GH faculty committee will review proposals and approve projects based upon the soundness of the proposal and the feasibility of getting the project completed within the intended timeline.

***Students applying for this option must have a faculty mentor from the GH department who agrees in writing to work intensively with the student throughout the semester.*** The faculty mentor serves as CE advisor and will need to sign off on the project proposal formally before it is submitted to the committee. In order to ensure that the faculty committee has sufficient time to review your proposal before meeting, it is imperative that you communicate with your CE advisor well in advance of posted submission deadlines. Failure to do so may result in your CE not being reviewed or accepted by the committee. Students are required to meet with their CE advisor throughout the writing process. The advisor's role is similar to that of a Senior Author or Scientific Director, who provides direction and advice to the student, but the student must do the actual analysis and writing.

Option 2 papers must be ready for submission to an academic journal in order to be considered final. The decision about whether or not a draft is ready for submission and, therefore, final will be at the discretion of the CE advisor.

---

**OPTION 2 DEADLINES**


---

***The deadlines for submitting paper proposals and final drafts are hard deadlines.*** Both may be submitted earlier but not later than the indicated date. Students who choose this option are encouraged to start the proposal process early and to submit the proposal for review prior to the deadline to allow extra time to complete the paper. Deadlines given for the 3 intermediate drafts are guidelines and can be determined in consultation with your CE advisor. A work plan for submitting the intermediate drafts ***must*** accompany your proposal. Once you have agreed on a work plan with your advisor, you can only change deadlines with the consent of your CE advisor.

Your paper will be final when your CE advisor agrees that it is ready to be submitted to a journal. The submission date and logistics can be arranged with your CE advisor.

<b>Fall 2016 Graduation</b>	<b>Spring 2017 Graduation</b>	<b>Summer 2017 Graduation</b>
Proposal & CE Contract: <b>Sept. 9</b>	Proposal & CE Contract: <b>Jan. 13</b>	Proposal & CE Contract: <b>May 12</b>
Draft 1: October 7	Draft 1: February 17	Draft 1: June 2
Draft 2: November 4	Draft 2: March 17	Draft 2: June 30
Draft 3: December 2	Draft 3: April 17	Draft 3: August 4
Final Draft: <b>December 16</b>	Final Draft: <b>April 28</b>	Final Draft: <b>August 16</b>

---

**OPTION 2 PROPOSAL CHECKLIST**

---

Use the outline below as the template for your proposal, adding whatever other information you feel is necessary for the GH Curriculum Committee to judge the merits of the paper proposal.

**Submission Checklist:**

- Set up a meeting with your advisor or a faculty mentor to discuss your interest in doing this option and to ask if she/he is willing to work with you and to discuss topic possibilities and target journals. Be sure to do this well ahead of the proposal due date.
- Submit the proposal to your CE advisor ahead of the deadline in order to get suggestions for revision and approval for submission to the GH Curriculum Committee.
- Ask your CE advisor to email the Program Manager to indicate that she/he has read the proposal and agrees to work with you toward completion and submission of the paper to an academic journal.
- Copy and paste the template below into a new document and start filling it in.
- Submit an electronic copy of the proposal to the Program Manager by deadline.
- Register with your CE advisor for a 2-credit directed study (GH943). Directed Study and Add/Drop forms are available from the Registrar's Office and online on at <http://sph.bu.edu/registrar> on the forms page.

---

**OPTION 2 PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

---

Name:

Advisor:

Title:

Target Journal:

I. Objective: (1 paragraph)

II. Significance/Rationale: (1 paragraph)

III. Data Source/Evidence Base: (1 paragraph)

IV. Working Outline: (as detailed as possible)

V. Work Plan for Submitting Drafts:

VI. Working Bibliography: (approximately 15 to start with)

**OPTION 3—INDEPENDENT PROJECT**

This option can be taken for no credit (GH 950), or as a 1 or 2 credit directed study (GH943). Please note that Option 3 CEs often take more than 1 semester to complete. The objective of this option is to encourage creative and innovative projects from students who have an idea for a CE that does not fit into the previous two options. The Department will issue a call for submission three times a year to accommodate the January, May, and September graduation cycles. A GH faculty committee will review proposals and approve projects based upon the soundness of the proposal and the feasibility of getting the project completed within the intended timeline. Possible examples of independent projects include a film documentary, an advocacy campaign, a public forum, a fundraising project, etc.

Students applying for this option must have a CE advisor from the GH department who agrees in writing to work intensively with the student throughout the semester. The CE advisor will need to formally sign off on the project proposal before it is submitted to the committee. In order to ensure that the faculty committee has sufficient time to review your proposal before meeting, it is imperative that you communicate with your CE advisor well in advance of posted submission deadlines. Failure to do so may result in your CE not being reviewed or accepted by the committee. Students are required to meet with their advisor throughout the semester in order to ensure they are on track with their project deliverables.

The final product will be evaluated by the student’s CE advisor. The project will be deemed “complete” based on case-by-case criteria to be proposed by the student. Films might be screened, town hall meetings will transpire and follow-up activities completed, websites launched, etc.

**OPTION 3 DEADLINES**

*The deadlines for submitting project proposals and completion are hard deadlines.* Both may be submitted earlier but not later than the indicated date. Students who choose this option are encouraged to start the proposal process early and submit the proposal for review prior to the deadline to allow extra time to complete the project. If you are planning a public presentation, be sure to plan according to the SPH calendar. A work plan must accompany your proposal, including set dates when you will check in with your CE advisor to report progress on your project. Once you have agreed on a work plan with your advisor, you can only change deadlines with the consent of your CE advisor.

<b>Fall 2016 Graduation</b>	<b>Spring 2017 Graduation</b>	<b>Summer 2017 Graduation</b>
Proposal & CE Contract: <b>Sept. 9</b>	Proposal & CE Contract: <b>Jan. 13</b>	Proposal & CE Contract: <b>May 12</b>
Draft 1: October 7	Draft 1: February 17	Draft 1: June 2
Draft 2: November 4	Draft 2: March 17	Draft 2: June 30
Draft 3: December 2	Draft 3: April 17	Draft 3: August 4
Final Draft: <b>December 16</b>	Final Draft: <b>April 28</b>	Final Draft: <b>August 16</b>

---

**OPTION 3 PROJECT PROPOSAL CHECKLIST**

---

Use the outline below as the template for your proposal, adding whatever other information you feel is necessary for the GH faculty approval committee to judge the merits and feasibility of the project.

**Submission Checklist:**

- Set up a meeting with your advisor to discuss your interest in doing this option and to ask if he/she is willing to work with you. If you will need additional assistance outside of your adviser's field of expertise, the two of you can brainstorm about other potential faculty mentors or resources.
- Submit the proposal to your advisor **ahead of the deadline** in order to get suggestions for revisions and approval for submission to the GH faculty approval committee.
- Copy and paste the template below into a new document and start filling it in. There are example proposals available on the GH Blast. Please consult these as you are writing your proposal.
- Your proposal must include a work plan detailing deadlines for various phases of the project and a schedule for checking in with you advisor.
- Submit an electronic copy of the proposal to the GH Program Manager, by due date noted above.

---

**OPTION 3 PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

---

Name:

Advisor:

Project Title:

Organization:

I. Objective: (1 paragraph)

II. Significance/Rationale: (1 paragraph)

III. Methods

IV. Project Deliverables

V. Work Plan (including your definition of Completion):

**Section****3**

## Frequently Asked Questions about the GH Culminating Experience

The following frequently asked questions will give you a broader understanding of the culminating experience as well as important details to help you complete the process as smoothly as possible.

### GETTING STARTED

- What is a culminating experience (CE)?
- What are the GH CE options?
- When can I start working on my CE?
- I want to work on my CE this semester. What should I do first?
- What forms/documents do I need to complete in order to start working on my CE?
- Where can I find the CE contract, CE Guidelines, and online forms?

### FURTHER INFO

- I haven't completed my practicum yet. Can I still do an Option 1 Policy Analysis?
- Do I have to complete my CE for credit?
- What's the difference between the practicum trip report and the CE policy analysis (Option 1)?
- What is the difference between a CE advisor and your GH academic advisor?
- Does my CE advisor have to be a GH faculty member?
- Who should take GH777?

### SPECIAL CASES & TROUBLESHOOTING

- The submission deadline is quickly approaching, but I can't reach my advisor. What should I do?
- I started a large project over the summer and now I've decided that I would like to use this work as my CE project (option 2 or 3). Is this possible?
- I am done with all of my course work, but still need to do my practicum and culminating experience. Is it possible to finish both in the same semester?
- I am enrolled in the Kenya Field Studies Course, is it possible to complete the CE in time to graduate in September?
- I am a dual degree student enrolled in both the MPH and GMS, MSW, MBA, or MD program. Do all of the rules regarding the CE apply to me?
- I just found out that I have been accepted to medical school (or another academic program). It's May and the new program starts in August, but I still haven't completed my CE. What are my options?
- I'm leaving for the Peace Corps in 6 months. When should I complete my CE? Which option is best for me?
- I am working on an article manuscript (Option 2) for my CE. I have spent the whole semester analyzing my data and now it's December and I still haven't started writing. Can I still graduate in January?

---

## GETTING STARTED

---

### What is a culminating experience (CE)?

As defined by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH):\*

*All professional degree programs . . . shall assure that each student demonstrates skills and integration of knowledge through a culminating experience.*

*A culminating experience is one that requires a student to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and other learning experiences and to apply theory and principles in a situation that approximates some aspect of professional practice. It must be used as a means by which faculty judge whether the student has mastered the body of knowledge and can demonstrate proficiency in the required competencies.*

### What are the GH CE options?

Option 1: Policy Analysis

Option 2: Publishable Journal Article

Option 3: Independent Project

### When can I start working on my CE?

In order to start working on your CE, you must have completed 25 credits of coursework. Most students complete their CE after the practicum, but there are several exceptions to this.

### I want to work on my CE this semester. What should I do first?

First, read the CE Guidelines. Second, contact your academic advisor to let them know you are planning to work on your CE this semester. If you would like your academic advisor to be your CE advisor, make sure they are willing and able to do so this semester. If they are too busy or if you would like to work with a different GH faculty member as your CE advisor, it is your responsibility to ask another faculty member to be your CE advisor and to notify your faculty advisor about your plans.

### What forms/documents do I need to complete in order to start working on my CE this semester?

You will need to:

1. Fill out a CE Completion Contract for this semester with your signature and your CE advisor's signature. If you can't get your CE advisor's signature, you may forward me an email from them showing that they agree to work with you this semester.
2. Create a problem purpose statement (Option 1) or project proposal (Option 2 and 3).
3. Everyone working on their CE must complete the online request to complete CE form so that the Program Manager can track your progress.

Ideally, you will upload your CE completion contract and PPS/ project proposal via the online form, but you may also submit these documents by email, fax, or in person. You will need to get ALL of these items to the Program Manager by posted submission deadlines in order to complete your CE this semester.

### Where can I find the CE contract, CE Guidelines, online forms, and past examples of CEs?

You can find all of these on the GH Blast under the CE tabs. Click on the CE heading for general information, CE Guidelines, and CE completion contracts, and scroll down to subpages to complete online forms.

---

\* CEPH is the nationally recognized accrediting body for both schools of public health and public health programs

---

**FURTHER INFO**

---

**I haven't completed my practicum yet. Can I still do an Option 1 Policy Analysis?**

Yes. Most students write their CE about a topic related to their practicum experience, but this is not a requirement. You may complete a CE before your practicum. If you have already completed your practicum and want to write your CE on an unrelated topic, be sure to talk to your CE advisor and get their input.

**Do I have to complete my CE for credit?**

You may complete your CE for 0, 1, or 2 credits. The exception to this is Option 2 (Journal Article); if you choose option 2, you will need to register for a 2 credit directed study (GH 943). This is because Option 2 CEs typically require a significant investment of time for both you and your CE advisor, and it is important that your transcript reflect this.

**What's the difference between the practicum trip report and the CE policy analysis (Option 1)?**

See handouts provided by the GH Practicum Office explaining the trip report. The trip report is the document in which you describe and reflect on various experiences and lessons learned during your practicum. The Policy Analysis is an analysis of one aspect of the work you were doing during your practicum and will be based on a specific policy or programmatic question. The policy analysis will:

1. Frame a particular question or problem;
2. Provide relevant background on the scope of the problem, the context, and the organization;
3. Analyze the evidence base and current policies and interventions;
4. Make 1-3 focused recommendations that take cost and feasibility into consideration.

**What is the difference between a CE advisor and my GH academic advisor?**

Your CE advisor is a GH faculty member who agrees to work with you on your CE throughout the semester. In most cases, your GH academic advisor will also be your CE advisor. Here are a couple of reasons why your CE advisor might be different from your GH academic advisor:

1. Your faculty advisor is out of the country or unable to devote the necessary time to working with you this semester. They may suggest another faculty member with whom you might work.
2. Your topic is not an area of expertise for your advisor, and she/he suggests you work with a faculty member who knows more about it.
3. You have begun collaborating with another GH faculty member, and she/he thinks you could develop a CE based on this collaboration.

In all of these cases (and many more), be sure to communicate with both your academic advisor and your CE advisor so everyone is clear on who does what.

**Does my CE advisor have to be a GH faculty member?**

Yes. Because the requirements for the CE are unique to each Department, it is necessary that your CE advisor also be a GH faculty member. GH faculty members are aware of the specific requirements for the CE in our department, while a faculty member in another department may not be. In order to ensure that all students are evaluated fairly and completely on their final CE, you must work with a GH faculty member.

**Who should take GH777?**

Anyone doing Option 1 can take GH777. The course provides students with a structured environment and supportive community in which to write their papers. Drafts have hard deadlines. Sessions focus on topic development, desktop research, bibliographic software, citation formatting, writing process, etc. The course also provides you with a community of peers who are working on a similar project. The sessions provide a structured atmosphere for brainstorming, troubleshooting, peer support, and peer review. If you are a procrastinator or have a hard time setting your own deadlines and sticking to them, consider taking GH777.

---

**SPECIAL CASES & TROUBLESHOOTING**

---

**The submission deadline is quickly approaching, but I can't reach my advisor. What should I do?**

Call or email the Program Manager to discuss it. Please keep in mind that GH faculty members have many teaching, research, and travel commitments, so it is important to begin communicating about your CE well in advance of deadlines. If you are emailing in a panic on the due date, there's probably not much that can be done at that point.

**I started a large project over the summer and now I've decided that I would like to use this work as my CE project (option 2 or 3). Is this possible?**

In general, GH faculty will only agree to advise you on Option 3 projects that they know about in advance. Their role is to advise you on formulating a research question, study, or intervention design, etc. The best course is to be planning your CE in advance and to talk to your CE advisor as soon as you come up with your idea. Your CE advisor will give you guidance on what sorts of projects are potentially suitable for Option 3 and what the final deliverables should be. Word of warning, most faculty will be reluctant to get involved with a project that is already half-way completed.

**I am done with all of my course work, but still need to do my practicum and CE. Is it possible to finish both in the same semester?**

If you are planning to do Option 1 based on your practicum experience, you will likely not finish the required multiple drafts of the policy analysis by the end of the same semester. The policy analysis should be something you write once you know your practicum organization well, and have been there long enough to understand some of the key policy or programmatic issues they may be grappling with. The best case scenario is to start planning your policy analysis (with input from the organization staff and your faculty advisor) toward the end of your practicum, and to write it once you have finished. If it is possible to get an earlier start drafting the analysis then you should do so, but be sure to get approval from your CE advisor before you start.

**I am enrolled in the Kenya Course, is it possible to complete the CE (based on this experience) in time to graduate in September?**

It is highly unlikely. See previous answer for more details.

**I am a dual degree student enrolled in both the MPH and GMS, MSW, MBA, or MD program. Do all of the rules regarding the CE apply to me?**

Yes. You are responsible for completing the curriculum of each program. Be sure to maintain regular contact with your advisors in both programs to make sure that you are on track. The MBA culminating experience must be taken for 2 credits and has different requirements. See the MBA/MPH Faculty Director, Taryn Vian (tvian@bu.edu) for more details.

**I just found out that I have been accepted to medical school (or another academic program). It's May and the new program starts in August, but I still haven't completed my CE. What are my options?**

If you are applying to medical school for August admission, be sure to plan your Spring semester in the MPH program accordingly. Even if you are still waiting to hear from schools about your acceptance, you should be in regular contact with your CE advisor, planning and working on your CE during the Spring semester. We strongly encourage you to sign up for GH777. Please do not approach your advisor in a panic in May or June to make last minute plans to begin and finish the CE by mid-August. This will not work.

**I'm leaving for the Peace Corps in 6 months. When should I complete my CE? Which option is best for me?**

Finish the CE before you leave for the Peace Corps! Unless you have a clear plan and approval to do Options 2 or 3, your best bet will be to register for GH777 and do Option 1 the semester prior to your departure. The GH777 instructors will help you come up with a topic based on your interests that will, ideally, also help you educate yourself about public health in the region where you will be working.



**I am working on an article manuscript (Option 2) for my CE. I have spent the whole semester analyzing my data and now it's December and I still haven't started writing. Can I still graduate in January?**

No. The paper must be complete and refined enough to be submitted to the journal you have chosen. This means that you will need to have gone through a multiple draft process in close consultation with your CE advisor, and she/he must agree that the manuscript is ready to be sent out.

**Section****4****Checklist for Final CEs**

Please use this list to determine if your CE is formatted correctly. All CEs must have the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ CE cover page with abstract, key words, student name, and CE advisor(s) names.

The cover page should be the first page of your document. Do not submit it as a separate document.

\_\_\_\_\_ PDF file format

\_\_\_\_\_ Page numbers

\_\_\_\_\_ 12 point type

\_\_\_\_\_ Times New Roman font (or similarly standard font)

\_\_\_\_\_ No typos or grammatical errors

\_\_\_\_\_ No evidence of track changes

\_\_\_\_\_ Section titles and sub-titles

\_\_\_\_\_ Correct use of in-text citations (using APA or Vancouver style)

\_\_\_\_\_ Correct formatting, complete works cited list at the end of the paper

\_\_\_\_\_ Should be no longer than 20 double-spaced pages (not including tables, graphs, works cited, or appendices).

## Section

## 5

## Rubric for Assessing Culminating Experience Papers and Projects

### An *“Exceeds Expectations”* CE Paper/Project will...

- Satisfy all requirements in CE Checklist (page 16)
- Consistently demonstrates clear, accurate, detailed and comprehensive understanding of the relevant facts / data / theories / terms as well as the ability to organize the information for presentation, documentation, and further examination by identified decision-maker(s).
- Demonstrates confident ability to work with the key concepts / information / process / theory by applying them to a problem or context, making predictions, drawing inferences, analyzing patterns and component parts, communicating insightful contrasts and comparisons.
- Demonstrates clear logical arguments related to stated thesis.
- Demonstrates clear linear progression between thesis and recommendations.
- Demonstrates insightful ability to take ideas / theories / processes / principles further by making generalizations and describing implications (including cost and feasibility) as well as to assess the value, credibility and power of well-considered choices or options.

### A *“Meets Expectations”* CE Paper/Project will...

- Satisfy all requirements in CE Checklist (page 16)
- Demonstrates an adequate understanding of the relevant facts / data / theories / terms as well as the ability to organize the information for presentation, documentation, and further examination by identified decision-maker(s).
- Demonstrates adequate ability to work with the key concepts / information / process / theory -- applying them to a problem or context, making predictions, drawing inferences, analyzing patterns and component parts, communicating insightful contrasts and comparisons.
- Demonstrates clear logical arguments related to stated thesis.
- Demonstrates clear linear progression between thesis and recommendations.
- Demonstrates adequate ability to take ideas / theories / processes / principles further by making generalizations and describing implications (including cost and feasibility) as well as to assess the value, credibility and power of well-considered choices and opinions.

### A *“Needs Improvement to Pass”* CE Paper/Project is flawed and cannot pass unrevised.

Papers not yet passable are characterized by

- Uneven or inadequate understanding of the relevant facts / data / theories / terms as well as a limited ability to organize the information for application, presentation, documentation, and/or further examination by decision-makers who are not clearly identified.
- Uneven or very limited ability to work with the key concepts / information / process / theory -- applying or extending them with mixed or limited success to a new problem or context, making predictions, drawing inferences, analyzing patterns and component parts, communicating insightful contrasts and comparisons.
- Demonstrate uneven and superficial ability to take ideas / theories / processes / principles further by making generalizations and identifying implications (including cost and feasibility) as well as a limited and superficial ability to assess the value, credibility and power of well-considered choices and opinions.
- Gaps in logic
- Extraneous facts and recommendations

## Section

## 6

## Structuring Your Policy Analysis

There are many ways to write a policy analysis. This is one possible format. If another format will work better for your audience, consult with your CE advisor to discuss a more appropriate structure.

**Set your paper up in policy analysis format:**

Use subheadings, tables, and other formatting to improve readability and emphasize key points. You can use a Word template, but this is not necessary.

**Note:** Please use 12 pt. font. Papers should be 12 and 20 pages double-spaced. You may use strategically placed tables or other graphics to summarize indicators/data or bullets for points that you want to highlight.

**Articulate and frame your question (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph):**

Articulate both the question you are answering and a succinct version of your recommendation.

**Note:** This is your opportunity to grab the reader's attention. Try to create a sense of urgency without being sensational.

**Define the issue and present basic background facts (1 page):**

Address basic epidemiology; provide the reader with a sense of the scope and nature of the problem. (Who is the problem effecting? To what extent? How does the problem impact health outcomes?)

**Present a critique of the evidence base and current policy options (2 pages):**

This will be based on the course readings and any other relevant literature. Identify alternative approaches and gaps in the existing knowledge base about effective strategies.

**Remember:** You are building a case for the strategy YOU will be recommending. So in this section you are guiding the audience to agree with the strategy you have selected as most promising, based on the evaluation of evidence. **Do not** ignore evidence that does not support your proposal. It is important to acknowledge contradictory information as you articulate the reasoning behind your recommendation.

**Propose a single programmatic or policy recommendation to address the problem****(1-2 pages):**

Describe the target population, components/intervention, and outcomes in enough detail that your audience can get a coherent sense of the program or policy. Identify who (personnel, administrative responsibility) will be involved in implementing this program or policy. Another important detail is when and how the program will be evaluated. Don't spend a lot of time on this, but do try to work in a short explanation in a sentence or two.

**Discuss the major constituencies who will be affected by any change in programs or policies (1-2 pages):**

This is your opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the political nuances that impinge on any policy or programmatic decision. Think carefully about the constituencies who have a stake in your recommended approach and what their perspectives will be. What arguments can you anticipate that will be brought for and against your recommendation? Be sure to address cost and feasibility.

**Conclude with a summary paragraph in which you remind readers of the urgency and significance of the issue. (1 paragraph)**



CE Forms

---

## CE Completion Contract FALL 2016

Boston University School of Public Health Department of Global Health  
Must Be Submitted with Problem Purpose Statement no later than 5:00pm on  
September 9 (Option #2 & 3) or September 14, 2016 (Option #1, except GH777)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ BUID: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Intended Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CE Option:  Option 1: Policy Analysis     Option 2: Journal Article     Option 3: Independent Project

CE Credits :  0 credit (GH950)     0 credit (GH951 CE extension)     1 credit (GH943)     2 credits (GH943)

### FINAL DEADLINE FOR CULMINATING EXPERIENCE:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand that in order to graduate in January 2017, my Culminating Experience paper or project must be completed and have final approval from my advisor, \_\_\_\_\_ before **December 16, 2015 (5:00 pm)**.

I understand that there will be **no** exceptions to the policy. Students who finalize their Culminating Experience papers or projects after **December 16** will be moved to a May 2017 graduation date.

### Draft due date guidelines:

**The Problem Purpose Statement(PPS)/Proposal and final draft dates are hard deadlines.** You can adapt the due dates for drafts 1-3 in consultation with your advisor. Your work plan must be included in your Problem Purpose Statement/Proposal. Intermediate drafts submitted after the date agreed to in the work plan without prior approval may jeopardize your ability to finish in time for January graduation.

**Option 1 PPS:** September 14 (5:00 pm); **Draft 1:** October 7; **Draft 2:** November 4; **Draft 3:** December 2;  
**Final Draft:** December 16 (5:00 pm)

**Options 2 and 3: Proposal:** September 9 (5:00 pm); **Draft 1:** October 7; **Draft 2:** November 4; **Draft 3:** December 2;  
**Final Draft:** December 16 (5:00 pm)

**Note the December 16 date is firm and is for receipt of the document by the Program Manager and confirmation of its acceptance by the responsible faculty. Students should submit final revisions to the faculty advisor(s) with sufficient time for review, approval, and transmission to the Program Manager by 5:00 PM on December 16. Students submitting an approved document after this time will not graduate until May 2017.**

**Definitions:** For all CE Options, all written work must go through a multi-draft process. A **final culminating paper** has gone through **at least** 3 drafts and has received written approval from your CE advisor (If enrolled in GH777, the paper must receive final approval from teaching faculty). For Option 3, a **final culminating project** has fulfilled the goals established by the advising GH faculty member and the student in the project proposal and has received written faculty approval.

**NOTE:** This contract must be signed and submitted to the Program Manager with your PPS/Proposal in order for you to be eligible to finish your CE in time for January 2017 graduation. If your advisor is unable to sign the contract, you may forward an email indicating their approval to the Program Manager. Complete your CE Contract and PPS/Proposal and upload copies at the end of the online "Request to Complete CE Form" available through the GH Blast website. If you have trouble with the online form, you may email documents or bring in person to the GH office.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CE Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## CE Completion Contract Spring 2017

Boston University School of Public Health Department of Global Health

Must be submitted with Problem Purpose Statement no later than 5:00pm on

Jan 13 (Option #2 & 3) or Jan. 27, 2017 (Option #1, GH777 may have different deadline)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ BUID: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Intended Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CE Option:  Option 1: Policy Analysis     Option 2: Journal Article     Option 3: Independent Project

CE Credits :  0 credit (GH950)     0 credit (GH951 CE extension)     1 credit (GH943)     2 credits (GH943)

### FINAL DEADLINE FOR CULMINATING EXPERIENCE:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand that in order to graduate in May 2017, my Culminating Experience paper or project must be completed and have final approval from my advisor, \_\_\_\_\_ before **April 28, 2017 (5:00 pm)**.

I understand that there will be **no** exceptions to the policy. Students who finalize their Culminating Experience papers or projects after **April 28** will be moved to a September 2017 graduation date.

### Draft due date guidelines:

*The Problem Purpose Statement(PPS)/Proposal and final draft dates are hard deadlines. You can adapt the due dates for drafts 1-3 in consultation with your advisor. Your work plan must be included in your Problem Purpose Statement/Proposal. Intermediate drafts submitted after the date agreed to in the work plan without prior approval may jeopardize your ability to finish in time for May graduation.*

**Option 1 PPS:** January 27 (5:00 pm); **Draft 1:** February 17; **Draft 2:** March 17; **Draft 3:** April 17;  
**Final Draft:** April 28 (5:00 pm)

**Options 2 and 3: Proposal:** January 13 (5:00 pm); **Draft 1:** February 17; **Draft 2:** March 17; **Draft 3:** April 17;  
**Final Draft:** April 28 (5:00 pm)

**Note the April 28 date is firm and is for receipt of the document by the Program Manager and confirmation of its acceptance by the responsible faculty. Students should submit final revisions to the faculty advisor(s) with sufficient time for review, approval, and transmission to the Program Manager by 5:00 PM on April 28. Students submitting an approved document after this time will not graduate until September 2017.**

**Definitions:** For all CE Options, all written work must go through a multi-draft process. A **final culminating paper** has gone through **at least** 3 drafts and has received written approval from your CE advisor (If enrolled in GH777, the paper must receive final approval from teaching faculty). For Option 3, a **final culminating project** has fulfilled the goals established by the advising GH faculty member and the student in the project proposal and has received written faculty approval.

**NOTE:** This contract must be signed and submitted to the Program Manager with your PPS/Proposal in order for you to be eligible to finish your CE in time for May 2017 graduation. If your advisor is unable to sign the contract, you may forward an email indicating their approval to the Program Manager. Complete your CE Contract and PPS/Proposal and upload copies at the end of the online "Request to complete CE Form" available through the GH Blast website. If you have trouble with the online form, you may email documents or bring in person to the GH office.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CE Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## CE Completion Contract Summer 2017

Boston University School of Public Health Department of Global Health  
Must Be Submitted with Problem Purpose Statement no later than 5:00pm on  
May 12 (Option #2 & 3) or May 19, 2017 (Option #1)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ BUID: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Intended Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CE Option:  Option 1: Policy Analysis  Option 2: Journal Article  Option 3: Independent Project

CE Credits :  0 credit (GH950)  0 credit (GH951 CE extension)  1 credit (GH943)  2 credits (GH943)

### FINAL DEADLINE FOR CULMINATING EXPERIENCE:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand that in order to graduate in September 2017, my Culminating Experience paper or project must be completed and have final approval from my advisor, \_\_\_\_\_ before **August 16, 2017 (5:00 pm)**.

I understand that there will be **no** exceptions to the policy. Students who finalize their Culminating Experience papers or projects after **August 16** will be moved to a January 2018 graduation date.

### Draft due date guidelines:

*The Problem Purpose Statement(PPS)/Proposal and final draft dates are hard deadlines. You can adapt the due dates for drafts 1-3 in consultation with your advisor. Your work plan must be included in your Problem Purpose Statement/Proposal. Intermediate drafts submitted after the date agreed to in the work plan without prior approval may jeopardize your ability to finish in time for September graduation.*

**Option 1 PPS:** May 19 (5:00 pm); **Draft 1:** June 2; **Draft 2:** June 30; **Draft 3:** August 4; **Final Draft:** August 16

**Options 2 and 3: Proposal:** May 12 (5:00 pm); **Draft 1:** June 2 **Draft 2:** June 30; **Draft 3:** August 4; **Final Draft:** August 16

**Note the August 16 date is firm and is for receipt of the document by the Program Manager and confirmation of its acceptance by the responsible faculty. Students should submit final revisions to the faculty advisor(s) with sufficient time for review, approval, and transmission to the Program Manager by 5:00 PM on August 16. Students submitting an approved document after this time will not graduate until January.**

**Definitions:** For all CE Options, all written work must go through a multi-draft process. A **final culminating paper** has gone through **at least** 3 drafts and has received written approval from your CE advisor (If enrolled in GH777, the paper must receive final approval from teaching faculty). For Option 3, a **final culminating project** has fulfilled the goals established by the advising GH faculty member and the student in the project proposal and has received written faculty approval.

**NOTE:** This contract must be signed and submitted to the Program Manager with your PPS/Proposal in order for you to be eligible to finish your CE in time for September 2017 graduation. If your advisor is unable to sign the contract, you may forward an email indicating their approval to the Program Manager. Complete your CE Contract and PPS/Proposal and upload copies at the end of the online "Request to complete CE Form" available through the GH Blast website. If you have trouble with the online form, you may email documents or bring in person to the GH office.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CE Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



---

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT OF GLOBAL HEALTH  
CULMINATING EXPERIENCE COVER PAGE**

Name:

CE Advisor:

Culminating Experience Paper or Project Title:

Abstract (150-300 words)

Key Words:

CE Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_