Health Communications and Promotion (HCP) Certificate

Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) Guidelines

I. Overview of ILE

The goal of the functional Health Communication and Promotion (HCP) Certificate is to equip students with the knowledge, skills and experience to create and implement communications-based strategies that motivate healthy behaviors, change social norms, and promote public health programs and policies. Consistent with the goal of the HCP Certificate, the Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) is the opportunity for students to demonstrate their attainment of MPH foundational competencies and the competencies embedded in the HCP Certificate, through a semester-long integrative learning experience (Appendix I).

Students must apply to graduate at https://www.bu.edu/sph/students/advising-and-registration/policies-and-procedures/forms/graduation-application/ in order to be registered for the ILE (PH845E1). After filling out a graduation application, the Registrar's Office will be in contact with students regarding ILE registration at the beginning of the semester in which they intend to graduate. PH845 is a zero-credit course.

II. ILE Assignment Overview

Our aim is to give students the opportunity to practice communication knowledge and skills within the framework of an issue of importance to them. As such, we have designed the HCP ILE to allow students to self-select an organization/project and communication objective on which to focus. In the HCP ILE Assignment, students will apply the variety of skills and competencies achieved throughout their training in the HCP Certificate through the thorough assessment of a public health communication need/objective identified within an organization (or a project within an organization), and the subsequent strategic development of an approach to support this need/objective. Students will be asked to identify an **existing or emerging** public health organization or project of interest, and pinpoint at least one communication objective they seek to address with media executions that support the communication objective. This organization/project serves as the basis for the ILE. Students may expand upon or adapt existing objectives to serve the mission, target population, and/or strategies of their chosen organization/project.

Organization/Project Selection Details

In selecting organizations/projects and communication objectives for the ILE, students should consider the following *(please note that the below do not all need to be answered, but are provided as guiding questions)*:

1) Public Health Issue(s) – Is the organization/project you selected addressing a public health issue or set of issues? How does the organization's mission and goals relate to this issue?
2) Current Approach(es) – Are there existing intervention(s), activities, or approaches currently being used by the organization to address the need/objective(s)? Do you see gaps here that you could address with additional strategic communication tactics?
3) Communication Objectives – Does the organization publicize any communication objective(s) that might guide your ILE? The objective(s) may range in activity of interest and target population of focus (i.e., engagement of diverse stakeholders to develop and implement an intervention, promotion of an intervention to targeted community participants, increased awareness and reach of an intervention to the community and potential funders, presenting and publicizing the effectiveness of an intervention to various stakeholders with evidence from evaluation if data exist).
4) Evaluation and Data Collection Efforts – Does the organization have any evaluation efforts or results that they have done to assess the work they've done thus far? Again, does this reveal any gaps that you could address with communication materials?

Each HCP ILE student will be required to design a **communication strategy** (i.e., intervention) that addresses at least one communication objective that could benefit their selected organization and includes three executions (see Appendix II) that correspond to the organization's communication objective(s) that you have identified or created. Thus the final ILE has three parts as described in further detail in the sections below.

When you submit your ILE Approval form (Appendix IV), please identify at least one communication objective that you will address. Please note that you will be developing three media executions to support your selected communication objective(s), and that these media executions should differ from any materials that have been made publicly available by the organization (though you are encouraged to review the organization's existing materials as guidance in developing your own). Please contact the HCP Certificate Director, Dr. Monica Wang (mlwang@bu.edu) as soon as possible if you need assistance identifying an organization/project that fits your interest.

ILE Assignment Details

PART 1: Narrative of the Communication Strategy

- Students will describe the specific communication strategy being used to address the issue surrounding their chosen organization/project in a complete narrative. As part of this narrative, students should:

- Demonstrate a command of skills in developing a communication strategy that is supported by social and behavioral theories and empirical evidence.
- Assess audience-specific characteristics including socioeconomic status, health literacy level, and other social and cultural factors as well as political context in order to determine potential effectiveness of the selected communication strategy.
- Compare and evaluate alternative communication channels and platforms to carry out the implementation.
- Demonstrate the ability to assess implementation fidelity and further evaluate whether the communication strategy achieves its targeted public health goal (i.e., promoting public health programs and policies, improving social norms for better lifestyles, and motivating healthy behaviors).

- To assist you with the development of the narrative, below are questions for your consideration. While your responses do not have to be in order of the following questions, each of the questions should be addressed fully in the narrative to create a unified strategy that is comprehensive, creative, and practical.
    1) What is the problem of priority and what has been done in the past to address it?
    2) What is the intervention or approach of interest? Provide some brief description. [NOTE: This is where you identify your specific intervention or approach that you will focus on.]
    3) What is the best way to leverage change in order to support the intervention or approach of interest? Make an argument for why this is most strategic.
    4) How will you use media and communication to advance this change and therefore support the intervention or approach of interest?
    5) Who is the target population of the communication (i.e., who do you want the communication to ultimately reach)? Why is this population a strategic point of focus? How will you address varying levels of literacy in your communication?
    6) What is your communication objective(s)? In other words, what do you want your target population to **do** after they receive your communication or hear your message?
    7) What **benefits** will your target population experience if they accomplish the communication objective(s)? In other words, what are some ways in which you will motivate or appeal to your target population so they accomplish the communication objective(s)?
    8) What is the tone of the message including the feeling, imagery, sounds, and impression?
    9) What channels of communication would be most appropriate to advance your communication objective(s)? Consider all forms of media and refer to the media executions list (Appendix II) for ideas.
    10) How do you envision different media executions will, when considered cohesively, contribute to your communication objective(s)?
    11) What existing efforts – nationally, locally, or within the public health agency – exist that could provide leverage for advancing your communication strategy?
    12) What resources are required to implement the communication strategy?
    13) What are plans for evaluation of the communication to examine both implementation of the communication strategy and outcomes experienced by the communication

strategy? In other words, how will you measure whether this has been implemented successfully and if positive outcomes were achieved?

- Below are the text specifications of the narrative:
    - No more than **10 pages**, exclusive of title page, appendices, and references.
    - Title page with your name, organization that you're focusing on for the ILE project, and selected communication objective(s).
    - 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left, right)
    - 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Arial
    - Double-spacing

PART 2: Media Executions to Implement the Communication Strategy

- In order to execute the communication strategy outlined in the narrative, each student will select and develop three media executions that each advance the communication objective(s). Students will choose one media execution from each of three engagement categories – media-focused executions, visually-focused executions, text-focused executions. The list of executions can be found in Appendix II.
- In selecting media executions, students should choose three media executions that are appropriate and creative to advance the communication objective(s) of their selected organization.
- The three media executions should be individual documents that, when combined, contribute to a cohesive effort. Meaning, they are three distinct yet connected media executions rather than disconnected ones. It should be clear in the communication strategy narrative how the three selected media executions work collectively to advance the communication objective(s).
- Each media execution should contain a coversheet (up to one page) that lists the following information:
    - When the media execution is intended to be implemented
    - The target of the media execution (presumably it is the target population listed in the communication strategy narrative though if it isn't provide reasoning for why it isn't)
    - The purpose the media execution will serve
- **The page limit for this section will depend on the media executions selected**. Writing specifications should follow those required by the media execution. For example, if a mock social media page is being established, that has different writing specifications than an infographic or an editorial.

PART 3: Presentation of the Communication Strategy and Media Executions

- Students will deliver an oral presentation to HCP Certificate faculty and staff. The presentation will summarize the key points from the communication strategy narrative and will outline the three developed media executions.
- The presentation will be a total of **10 minutes, including 8 minutes of presentation and 2 minutes of question and answer** with the audience.
- The presentation slide deck will be submitted as part of the HCP Certificate ILE.

III. Timeline for Completing the ILE Requirement

a. HCP Certificate ILE students must select at least one communication objective that addresses a public health problem identified by an organization, or a project within an organization, and submit that communication objective for review. **The approval form for this step can be found in Appendix IV. Students must submit their preferred communication objective to the course Blackboard website. The HCP Certificate Director will review the approval form and inform the students of the approval status.** ***(Due by Monday, February 23rd).***

b. Upon approval of identified communication objective(s), the student will carry out relevant literature review, compare and analyze media venues to determine the most appropriate ones as the bases to design and implement media executions for the communication strategy. Special attention must be paid to selecting and adapting appropriate venues and features that are tailored to various stakeholders and diverse audiences. **The student must submit, using the course Blackboard website, their draft of the communication strategy narrative as well as their draft of the three media executions with coversheets describing each media execution.** ***(Draft narratives are due by Monday, March 23rd and draft media executations are due by Monday, April 6th).***

c. The student will continue working to refine and finalize the three media executions as well as the communication strategy narrative according to the writing specifications outlined in Section II above. Students will submit the final written deliverable that includes the communication strategy narrative (10 pages maximum), media executions (varying number of pages, depending on the media execution), and accompanying coversheets for the three media executions (3 pages maximum). Based on the final 10-page narrative and selected media execution, the student will deliver a brief oral presentation to HCP Certificate faculty and staff. ***(Final reports, including narrative, media executions, and presentation slide deck, are due to the course Blackboard website on Monday, April 20th; Oral presentation at assigned time (TBD) during week of April 20th).***

d. Please submit your Final MPH Reflections to the course Blackboard website by Friday, April 24th).

Integrative Learning Experience
Cross-Certificate Grading Rubric

This grading rubric was designed to be used across all functional certificates. For this reason, the categories are general but applicable to all Integrative Learning Experiences and will be applied to the specific deliverable(s) required by the certificate. ***12/15 will be required to receive passing grade.***

Assessment Dimension	Needs Improvement (1)	Acceptable (2)	Proficient (3)
Writing: *clear, concise, well-organized, correct grammar &usage.*	Writing has deficits in multiple areas that could be professionally detrimental	Writing has deficits in some areas and lacks some clarity but overall is acceptable in professional settings	Writing is clear and concise and is a strong professional product
Use of evidence: *Evidence is relevant, sources correctly cited, and synthesized to effectively provide insight into the question/issue*	Evidence is weak and/or not relevant to the question/issue posed with sources poorly cited	Evidence is somewhat relevant and timely to the question/issue posed with some sources correctly cited	Evidence is relevant, timely, and clearly summarized with sources correctly cited
Application of findings: *Implications of evidence, research, and/or findings are clearly identified and justified, and actions recommended are comprehensive, feasible, innovative, and ethical*	Recommendations do not logically follow from evidence, are questionable and/or inappropriate, and/or not comprehensive, feasible, innovative, and/or ethical	Recommendations somewhat flow logically from evidence and are justified though there are gaps, and/or recommendations are somewhat comprehensive, feasible, innovative, and/or ethical	Recommendations flow logically from evidence, are well-argued, and/or are comprehensive, feasible, innovative, and/or ethical
Overall presentation: *Clear communication of main points with engaging presentation style & incorporation of appropriate visuals*	Presentation is poorly organized, timed, written, and/or does not connect with the audience/reader	Presentation is somewhat organized and delivered in a somewhat engaging manner within time boundaries and/or written specifications	Presentation is clearly organized and delivered in engaging manner within time boundaries and/or written specifications
Reflection: *Questions are thoroughly addressed and demonstrate self-awareness and insight and competencies are mastered*	Writer does not thoroughly engage all questions, does not demonstrate self-awareness and insight, and/or mastery of competencies is not apparent	Writer somewhat engages all questions, demonstrates average self-awareness and insight, and/or demonstrates some competency achievement	Writer engages all questions, clearly articulating learning, change, and insights to drive further development, demonstrates self-awareness, and/or demonstrates mastery of competencies

Appendix I.

Health Communication & Promotion certificate competencies crosswalk integrated by the HCP ILE:

	Competency	ILE Component
HCP Certificate Specific Competencies	Design a communication strategy that is theory-driven, science-based, audience-centered, practicable, and evaluable	Part 1: Develop a communication strategy that is supported by social and behavioral theories and empirical evidence, assess audience-specific characteristics, assess implementation fidelity and evaluate whether the communication strategy achieves targeted goal.
	Apply a range of appropriate communication venues to support public health goals based on analysis and evaluation of alternative venues	Part 1: Compare and evaluate alternative communication channels and platforms to carry out implementation.
	Create effective materials and messages using strategies and tools tailored to diverse audiences, including those with lower health literacy	Part 1: Assess audience-specific characteristics, including socioeconomic status, health literacy level, and other social and cultural factors as well as political context. Part 2: Select and develop three media executions that advance the communication objective.
	Develop an evaluation plan for a communication strategy	Part 1: Assess implementation fidelity and evaluate whether the communication strategy achieves targeted goal. Consider the plan for evaluation of the communication strategy to examine both implementation of the strategy and outcomes experienced by the strategy.
	Demonstrate professional oral presentation skills to inform and persuade diverse audiences	Part 3: Deliver an oral presentation which summarizes key points from the communication strategy narrative and the three developed media executions.

MPH foundational competencies crosswalk integrated by the HCP ILE:

	Skills	Competencies	ILE Component
MPH Foundational Competencies	Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health	Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context	Part 1: Develop a communication strategy that is supported by social and behavioral theories and empirical evidence.
	Planning & Management to Promote Health	Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention	Part 1: Assess audience-specific characteristics, including consideration of target population for communication, why they are a strategic point of focus, and communication objective.
		Select methods to evaluate public health programs	Part 1: Assess implementation fidelity and evaluate whether the communication strategy achieves targeted goal. Consider the plan for evaluation of the communication strategy to examine both implementation of the strategy and outcomes experienced by the strategy.
	Policy in Public Health	Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes	Part 1: Consider existing efforts that could provide leverage for advancing the communication strategy, and assess resources required for implementation.

	Communication	Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors	Part 1: Compare and evaluate alternative communication channels and platforms to carry out implementation. Part 2: Select and develop three media executions that advance the communication objective.
		Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation	Part 1: Describe the specific communication strategy in a complete narrative. Part 2: Select and develop three media executions that advance the communication objective, including a cover sheet detailing the media execution's purpose and cohesion with communication strategy narrative. Part 3: Deliver an oral presentation which summarizes key points from the communication strategy narrative and the three developed media executions.
		Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content	Part 1: Assess audience-specific characteristics, including socioeconomic status, health literacy level, and other social and cultural factors as well as political context.

Appendix II. Media Execution Options, by Category of Engagement

The following are three categories of media executions that can be produced as part of the communication strategy. The mode of delivery of each of these can vary ranging from print to online to verbal but the defining feature of each category is the engagement of the target audience of the execution and whether that engagement is through media coverage, images and other visually-focused delivery, or written and verbal communication. Under each category are examples of media executions that would apply to the category. Students must choose **at least one execution** from each category to advance the communication strategy outlined and to meet the requirements of the Integrative Learning Experience for the Health Communication and Promotion Certificate.

Media-Focused Executions (i.e., to get the attention of the media to attend an event/cover a story)

- Pitch letter
- Press release
- Press event outline/media advisory
- Mock news story
- Verbal pitch/elevator pitch

Visually-Focused Executions (i.e., relies on mainly images and other visuals to engage the target population in a message)

- Posters
- Infographics
- Public Service Announcement
- Video
- Social media (i.e., Facebook page, Twitter feed, etc.)
- Website wireframes
- Mobile health application (including texting)

Text-Focused Executions (i.e., relies on words, stories, descriptions to engage the target population in a message)

- Letter to the Editor
- Commentary/Editorial
- Op-Ed
- Testimonial
- Interview
- Online discussion board/forum
- Online blog
- Slide deck/presentation
- Policy memo

Appendix III.

Please note that all MPH students must also complete the school-wide reflection essay in addition to the certificate-specific ILE project. Additional details can be found below. ***Please submit your Final MPH Reflections to the course Blackboard website by TBD)***

Final Reflection on the MPH Program:

Each student must write a reflective personal statement, not to exceed 4 single-spaced pages, which explores how the knowledge and experiences acquired while at BUSPH have addressed your interests, informed your mastery of the certificate competencies and professional development, as well as your next steps for your career and lifelong learning. Please be sure to link to specific experiences in courses, practica, Career PREP, jobs, etc, where appropriate.

Please note the reflection must address each of the following questions:

1. Reflect on your achievement of the MPH program and certificate(s) competencies through coursework, your practicum, Career PREP, and your ILE project. In which competencies do you feel most confident about performing in a professional setting? In which competencies would you have liked to gain more confidence? What aspects of the BUSPH curriculum contributed most to your confidence in each competency? In answering this question, please specify the competency(ies) from the above list(s).
2. Describe valuable learning opportunities that you pursued outside of required coursework and the practicum. This may include any professional development opportunities you pursued, organizations you joined, meetings you attended, or affiliations with a mentor. Please describe how each added value to your professional development and career readiness.
3. Reflect on your preparedness to pursue your career objectives after leaving BUSPH and the steps you plan to take upon graduating. How would you describe your career objectives at this time? How do you plan to pursue these? What challenges do you anticipate? What further knowledge, skills, or professional development opportunities do you wish you had gained while at BUSPH?
4. Reflect on your lifelong learning goals as you now see them. In what areas do you want to deepen your knowledge or competency? In what ways could BUSPH support your continued learning in these areas?

Appendix IV.

Integrative Learning Experience (ILE)
Health Communication and Promotion Certificate
ILE approval form – Summer 2025

Name: BU ID:

Additional Certificates (if applicable):

Date:

Selected organization/project:

Please describe at least one communication objective that your ILE will address:

Why did you select this particular communication objective?

Please tentatively discuss the three media executions you plan to develop to support this communication objective