

Competency Assessment

Tier 3 Public Health Professionals

January 2012

Developed by Janet Place, MPH, North Carolina Public Health Academy, University of North Carolina. Modified by the Public Health Foundation. Provided by the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice.

Technical Note: This assessment was designed for use with Adobe Acrobat/Reader. Scoring and other functions may not operate properly in other PDF viewers. To use the assessment, download and save this PDF form before entering your scores.

Competency Assessment for Tier 3¹ Public Health Professionals

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Introduction

The purpose of this competency assessment is to help you discover your level of competence on key dimensions of public health practice.

A competency is any knowledge or skill of an individual or organization that has been shown to cause or predict outstanding performance. A collection of competencies make up a behavioral roadmap that is directly related to both individual and organizational performance.

By assessing your level of knowledge or skill for each competency indicator described, you will be able to prioritize your learning time to focus on those areas that are most important to you and to concentrate where the need for training and learning may be greatest.

How to complete this competency assessment

The competency assessment should take about 20 minutes to complete. It is divided into the following key dimensions of public health practice:

- Analytical/Assessment
- Policy Development/Program Planning
- Communication
- Cultural Competency
- Community Dimensions of Practice
- Public Health Sciences
- Financial Planning and Management
- Leadership and Systems Thinking

- 1) Read each competency indicator listed under the key dimension.
- 2) In each dimension, and for each competency indicator, think about *what level* you are currently able to perform the skill. Then rate your level of proficiency on each indicator by selecting the number on the continuum from “None” (1) to “Proficient” (4) that best describes your self-reported level of expertise for that indicator. **Note:** The competency indicators listed in each key dimension should be interpreted as broadly as possible to apply to your position and principal setting of employment.

¹ Tier 3 public health professionals are (typically) individuals at a senior/management level or leaders of public health organizations. In general, individuals responsible for the major programs or functions of an organization, setting a strategy and vision for the organization, and/or building the organization's culture can be considered to be Tier 3 public health professionals. Tier 3 public health professionals (e.g., health officers, executive directors, CEOs, etc.) typically have staff who report to them.

In the example below, you would select number “4” for “Proficient” if you think you are excelling at this competency or select “1” for “None” if feel you need a great deal of improvement.

Example:

To what degree are you able to effectively...describe the characteristics of a population-based health problem?

1=None	I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

- 3) At the end of each key dimension there is a place to write any comments you have. For example, if you feel like an expert but may still want training or learning opportunities in a particular skill, please enter your comments in the comments section. You may also want to share this assessment with your supervisor, colleagues, or others and ask them to add comments as well. These comments may be helpful to you and your supervisor in planning for your professional development.
- 4) After you have entered in your responses for each key dimension, the sum of your scores will appear in the column next to “Total score.” Your average score will also appear in the column next to “Average total” and in the corresponding row of the “Your results” section at the end of the competency assessment.
- 5) Review your results and follow the guidance offered in the “Interpreting your results” section to determine your next steps.

AnalyticU/Assessment Skills

1=None	I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
1	Review the health status of populations and their related determinants of health and illness conducted by the organization (e.g. factors contributing to health promotion and disease prevention, availability and use of health services)	
2	Describe the characteristics of a population-based health problem (e.g. equity, social determinants, environment)	
3	Evaluate variables that measure public health conditions	
4	Critique methods and instruments for collecting valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data	
5	Expand access to public health data and information	
6	Evaluate the integrity and comparability of data	
7	Rectify gaps in data sources	
8	Ensure the application of ethical principles in the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of data and information	
9	Integrate the findings from quantitative and qualitative data into organizational operations	
10	Determine community-specific trends from quantitative and qualitative data (e.g. risks and benefits to the community, health and resource needs)	
11	Use information technology to collect, store, and retrieve data	
12	Incorporate data into the resolution of scientific, political, ethical, and social public health concerns	
13	Identify the resources to meet community health needs	
	Total score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average total (Divide the "Total score" by 13 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)	

Comments:

Policy Development#Program Planning Skills

1=None	I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
1	Evaluate information relevant to specific public health policy issues	
2	Decide policy options for public health organization	
3	Critique the feasibility and expected outcomes of various policy options (e.g. health, fiscal, administrative, legal, ethical, social, political)	
4	Critique selected policy options using data and information (e.g. health, fiscal, administrative, legal, ethical, social, political)	
5	Determine policy for the public health organization with guidance from the organization's governing body	
6	Critique decision analyses that result in policy development and program planning	
7	Ensure public health programs are consistent with public health laws and regulations	
8	Implement plans and programs consistent with policies	
9	Ensure the consistency of policy integration into organizational plans, procedures, structures, and programs	
10	Critique mechanisms to evaluate programs for their effectiveness and quality	
11	Oversee public health informatics practices and procedures (e.g. use of data and information technology standards across the agency where applicable, and use of standard software development life cycle principles when developing new IT applications)	
12	Implement organizational and system-wide strategies for continuous quality improvement	
13	Integrate emerging trends of the fiscal, social, and political environment into public health strategic planning	
	Total score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average total (Divide the "Total score" by 13 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)	

Comments:

Communication Skills

1=None	I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
1	Ensure that the health literacy of populations served is considered throughout all communication strategies	
2	Communicate in writing and orally, in person, and through electronic means, with linguistic and cultural proficiency	
3	Ensure that the public health organization seeks input from other organizations and individuals	
4	Ensure a variety of approaches are considered and used to disseminate public health information (e.g. social networks, media, blogs)	
5	Interpret demographic, statistical, programmatic, and scientific information for use by professional and lay audiences	
6	Apply communication and group dynamic strategies (e.g. principled negotiation, conflict resolution, active listening, risk communication) in interactions with individuals and groups	
7	Communicate the role of public health within the overall health system (e.g., federal, state, county, local government)	
Total score (Add all scores and enter total here)		
Average total (Divide the "Total score" by 7 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)		

Comments:

Cultural Competency Skills

1=None	I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
1	Ensure that there are strategies for interacting with persons from diverse backgrounds (e.g. cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, gender, age, ethnic, sexual orientation, professional, religious affiliation, mental and physical capabilities)	
2	Ensure the consideration of the role of cultural, social, and behavioral factors in the accessibility, availability, acceptability, and delivery of public health services	
3	Respond to diverse needs that are the result of cultural differences	
4	Assess the dynamic forces that contribute to cultural diversity	
5	Assess the need for a diverse public health workforce	
6	Assess the public health organization for its cultural competence	
7	Ensure the public health organization's cultural competence	
	Total score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average total (Divide the "Total score" by 7 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)	

Comments:

Community Dimensions of Practice Skills

1=None	I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
1	Evaluate the community linkages and relationships among multiple factors (or determinants) affecting health	
2	Encourage community-based participatory research efforts within the public health organization	
3	Establish linkages with key stakeholders	
4	Ensure the collaboration and partnerships of key stakeholders through the development of formal and informal agreements (e.g. MOUs, contracts, letters of endorsement)	
5	Maintain partnerships with key stakeholders	
6	Use group processes to advance community involvement	
7	Integrate the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations in the delivery of community health services	
8	Negotiate for the use of community assets and resources through MOUs and other formal and informal agreements	
9	Ensure community input when developing public health policies and programs	
10	Defend public health policies, programs, and resources	
11	Evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement strategies on public health policies, programs, and resources	
	Total score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average total (Divide the "Total score" by 11 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)	

Comments:

Public Health Scienceg Skills

1=None

2=Aware

3=Knowledgeable

4=Proficient

I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item

I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill

I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill

I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...

1	Critique the scientific foundation of the field of public health	
2	Explain lessons to be learned from prominent events in the history in comparison to the current events of the public health profession	
3	Incorporate the Core Public Health Functions and Ten Essential Services of Public Health into the practice of the public health sciences	
4	Apply the basic public health sciences (including, but not limited to, biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, health services administration, and social and behavioral health sciences) to public health policies and programs	
5	Integrate a review of the scientific evidence related to a public health issue, concern, or intervention into the practice of public health	
6	Synthesize scientific evidence from a variety of text and electronic sources	
7	Critique the limitations of research findings (e.g. limitations of data sources, importance of observations and interrelationships)	
8	Advise on the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures for the ethical conduct of research (e.g. patient confidentiality, human subject processes)	
9	Contribute to building the scientific base of public health	
10	Establish partnerships with academic and other organizations to expand the public health science base and disseminate research findings	
	Total score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average total (Divide the "Total score" by 10 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)	

Comments:

Financial Planning and Management Skills

1=None	I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
1	Leverage the interrelationships of local, state, and federal public health and health care systems for public health program management	
2	Leverage the organizational structures, functions, and authorities of local, state, and federal public health agencies for public health program management	
3	Manage partnerships with agencies within the federal, state, and local levels of government that have authority over public health situations or with specific issues, such as emergency events	
4	Manage the implementation of the judicial and operational procedures of the governing body and/or administrative unit that oversees the operations of the public health organization	
5	Defend a programmatic and organizational budget	
6	Ensure that programs are managed within current and forecasted budget constraints	
7	Critique strategies for determining budget priorities	
8	Determine budgetary priorities for the organization	
9	Evaluate program performance	
10	Use evaluation results to improve performance	
11	Approve proposals for funding from external sources	
12	Apply basic human relations skills to the management of organizations, motivation of personnel, and resolution of conflicts	

Financial Planning and Management Skills (Cont.)

1=None	I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
13	Integrate public health informatics skills into program and business operations (e.g. business process analysis, enterprise-wide information planning)	
14	Approve contracts and other agreements for the provision of services	
15	Include the use of cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, and cost-utility analyses in programmatic prioritization and decision making	
16	Incorporate data and information to improve organizational processes and performance	
17	Establish a performance management system	
	Total score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average total (Divide the "Total score" by 17 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)	

Comments:

Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

1=None	I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
1	Incorporate ethical standards of practice as the basis of all interactions with organizations, communities, and individuals	
2	Integrate systems thinking into public health practice	
3	Partner with stakeholders to determine key values and a shared vision as guiding principles for community action	
4	Resolve internal and external problems that may affect the delivery of Essential Public Health Services (e.g. through the identification of root causes and other QI processes)	
5	Advocate for individual, team, and organizational learning opportunities within the organization	
6	Promote mentoring, peer advising, coaching, or other personal development opportunities for the public health workforce, including yourself	
7	Ensure the measuring, reporting, and continuous improvement of organizational performance	
8	Ensure organizational practices are in concert with changes in the public health system, and the larger social, political, and economic environment	
9	Ensure the management of organizational change	
Total score (Add all scores and enter total here)		
Average total (Divide the "Total score" by 9 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)		

Comments:

Your results

Enter the average total from each key dimension in the corresponding row below.

Key dimension	Average total
Analytical/Assessment	
Policy Development/Program Planning	
Communication	
Cultural Competency	
Community Dimensions of Practice	
Public Health Sciences	
Financial Planning and Management	
Leadership and Systems Thinking	

Interpreting your results

Based on the averages you have for each key dimension in the “Your results” section above, you are now ready to identify the strengths in your practice and the areas that you would like to improve or strengthen.

For example, if you have scored a “1” in any dimension, you will want to consider focusing your time and energy towards achieving the competency indicators in that dimension, followed by dimensions in which you score a “2,” with a lower priority given to dimensions in which you scored a “3” or higher.

Once you have identified your priorities, you can use this information to guide you in developing a learning plan with one or more personal professional goals for the next year, in guiding a discussion with your supervisor, mentor or coach and in choosing learning opportunities that will help you reach your goals and meet the requirements for continuing competence in your occupation or discipline.

Original tool developed by Janet Place, MPH - North Carolina Public Health Academy at the University of North Carolina (modified by the Public Health Foundation). It may be modified as needed.