

An Examination of SABPAC-Approved Programs

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Received June 26; Revised and approved December 1, 1998

Abstract

A study of 17 university undergraduate programs in Community Health that have been approved by the SABPAC process was conducted to determine the characteristics of these programs. University bulletins were analyzed to determine characteristics such as the program's college name, department name, major name, type of degree(s), total major hours, total semester hours required for graduation, required Health Education courses, elective course hours, general education requirements, and grade point average for core courses. Findings indicate that there is a great degree of variation among the programs, but in most cases there seems to be an emphasis on process versus content courses. The findings from this study can be utilized by all undergraduate Community Health programs, in order to establish a program that would meet the requirements designated by the SABPAC process.

Introduction

The SABPAC (SOPHE-AAHE Baccalaureate Program Approval Committee) approval process is a way that the Health Education profession is monitoring undergraduate Health Education preparation programs throughout the United States. At this point in time, it is a voluntary process of quality assurance. The process involves a program self-study, fee and site visit by a team of Health Education professionals. A joint committee of the Society for Public Health Education and the American Association of Health Education oversee the approval process. The SABPAC process only approves programs with a community health education emphasis and utilizes the seven responsibilities of Health Education (National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, 1996). Therefore, school health concentrations, or other variants, must be accredited elsewhere (i.e., NCATE). At the time this study was conducted, 13 of the 17 programs reviewed had been approved by the SABPAC process, and 4 additional programs were in the approval process.

It should be acknowledged, however, that since this time, additional programs have been approved, a few programs may have allowed their approval to lapse, and several others have begun their self-study (Hawkins, 1998). See Table 1 for

the latest listing of SABPAC approved programs.

Table 1. SABPAC-approved Undergraduate Programs in Health Education

Truman University
New Mexico State University
Oregon State University
James Madison University
Western Kentucky University
Plymouth State College
East Carolina University
West Chester University
William Patterson College of New Jersey
North Carolina Central University
East Tennessee State University
Eastern Kentucky University
Texas Women's University

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the characteristics of SABPAC-approved undergraduate programs in Community Health. These characteristics were determined by examining each program's university bulletin and related materials. This information was entered on a matrix for recording purposes. Characteristics recorded for each program included their college name, department name, major name, type of degree(s), total major hours, total semester hours needed for graduation, required Health Education courses, elective course hours, general education requirements, and grade point average for core courses.

Sample and Methodology

The sample in this study consisted of 17 undergraduate programs that had completed, or were in the process of, SABPAC approval. For each program, a university undergraduate bulletin and course requirements were requested. Schools not initially responding were contacted through a follow-up letter to increase return rate. Of the 17 programs contacted, 16 (94%) sent materials regarding their undergraduate program in Health Education.

A matrix instrument was designed to record the characteristics for each individual program. Once constructed, its usefulness was tested using a sample of two undergraduate programs each by the two researchers. Through this verification process, it was determined that some relevant information was missing. Therefore, the matrix was revised to record specific program information. Upon re-evaluation, the matrix was found to be complete. It should be noted, however, that certain characteristics could not be determined from the materials supplied by the programs. In these cases, the programs were contacted and requested to send clarifying information. Two programs failed to supply information after two requests.

The recording process was conducted by the researchers. Once all of the individual programs were analyzed, the information was transferred to the master matrix for tallying purposes. The master matrix was then re-evaluated for accuracy. Once this procedure was completed, frequency distributions and percentages were determined for each category.

Results

College Name

The college names of specific programs varied tremendously. Health and Human Performance was the college name of 2 programs (13%). Other college names included: Nursing and Health Science, Health and Human Services, Health Science, School of Science and Health, Integrated Science and Technology, Public and Allied Health, School of Health and Science, Science, and Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Athletics (1 program each, or 6%). The college name could not be determined from materials supplied by three of the 16 programs (19%).

Department Name

Of the SABPAC-approved undergraduate Health Education programs analyzed, the most frequent department name was Public Health (3 programs, or 19%), followed by Health Science and Health Education (2 programs, or 13% each). Other department names included: Human Potential and Performance, Health Professions, Health Studies, Community Health and Nutrition, Community Health, Health, and Health, Physical Education and Recreation (one program each, or 6%). The department name could not be determined from the materials supplied for one program.

Major Name

The most frequently cited major name for the undergraduate Health Education programs analyzed was Community Health (4 programs, or 25%). This was followed by Community Health Education (3 programs, or 19%), and Health Education (2 programs, or 13%). Other major names included Public Health Education, Health Science, School and Community Health Education, Public Health/Health Promotion, Public Health, Health Education- School Health, and Community Health/Public Health (1 program, or 6% each).

The need for a minor for graduation requirements was not consistent from program to program, complimentary minors reported include: Business, Psychology, Nutrition, Biology, Sociology, or Communications.

Type of Degree(s)

The type of bachelor's degree conferred was determined for each SABPAC-approved program. All 16 programs cited the Bachelor of Science degree (B.S.) as the type of degree a student would earn upon completion of these programs.

Total Major Hours

In order to compute the number of hours required for the major concentration, quarter hours were first converted to semester hours for ease in comparison. Of the undergraduate Health Education programs analyzed, the most frequently listed number of hours required for the major were 40 and 45 (2 programs, or 13% each). The required major hours, however, ranged from 30 to 56 semester hours. Since some bulletins did not clearly define the difference between the major hours and supplemental hours, it was sometimes difficult to obtain an accurate count of major hours.

Total Semester Hours Required for Graduation

Of those programs explored, the most frequently listed number of hours required for graduation were 120 and 128 (2 programs, or 13% each). The semester hours required for graduation ranged from 120 to 140 hours.

Required Health Education Courses

In the SABPAC-approved undergraduate Health Education programs analyzed, the most frequently cited courses were Internship/Field Experience and Community Health Theory/Practice (13 programs, or 81% each). These were followed by Introduction to Health Promotion/Foundations and Environmental Health (12 programs, or 75% each), Health Programming and Planning and Epidemiology (11 programs, or 69% each), and Drug Education, Evaluation and Research in Health Promotion, Sexuality, and Biostatistics (10 programs, or 63% each). These courses were fairly consistent in all programs as being required, however, other courses may have appeared in either the other required component, or as electives. Some programs, however, had only required courses and no electives from which the student could choose. It should be noted that some interpretation of the course titles by the researchers was required. Therefore, some course titles were combined with other course titles if bulletin descriptions determined that content in

courses was similar. For a complete listing of all required courses of the SABPAC-approved undergraduate health education programs analyzed, see Table 2.

Elective Course Hours

The number of elective hours ranged from 0 to 15 semester hours, although some programs reported no elective courses listed.

General Education Requirements

All programs analyzed had general education requirements. The most frequently appearing number of general education hours was 30 semester hours (3 programs, or 19%). General education semester hour requirements ranged from 18 to 68 semester hours.

GPA for Core Courses

The most frequent Grade Point Average (GPA) required for core courses taken was a 2.5 (7 programs, or 44%). Three programs (19%) required a 2.0, one program (6%) required a 2.75, and the remaining 5 programs ((31%) did not report a GPA requirement for core courses.

Discussion

A few general comments can be made based on this review. First, many of the program descriptions and bulletin information needed clarification. At times, the information required for analysis could not be easily interpreted or was missing. Although these programs were contacted, the clarifying information was never received. Second, there appears to be a combination of both process and content area courses. Process courses, however, appeared to be the foundation of the SABPAC-approved programs (as evidenced by Table 2), while the content courses were supportive of these as electives.

Third, most programs contained a research course as part of their undergraduate Community Health curriculum. This is a crucial component for graduate school, and is often lacking at the undergraduate level, according to a report by the Carnegie Foundation (Marklein, 1998).

There are limitations to this study. First, this study only examined those programs that were currently involved in the SABPAC process (e.g., approved, in self-study, readying for site visit). It did not examine programs in Health Education that were not part of the SABPAC process.

TABLE 2. Required Health Education Courses In SABPAC - Approved Undergraduate Programs

Course Name	Number
Internship/Field Experience	13
Community Health/Theory/Practice	13
Intro Health Promotion/Foundations	12
Environmental Health	12
Epidemiology	11
Drug Education	11
Health Programming/Planning	10
Evaluation/Research in Health Promotion	10
Sexuality	10
Biostatistics	10
CPR/First Aid, Safety	9
Health Problems/Issues	8
Community Organization	7
Health Science/Behavior	7
Anatomy and Physiology I	6
Administration in Health (Community Agencies)	6
School Health Organization/Teaching	6
Stress Management	5
Nutrition	5
Anatomy and Physiology II	5
Computer Applications in Health Promotion	5
Health Communications I & II (Marketing)	5
Pathophysiology	5
Consumer Health	5
Gerontology	5
General Chemistry	4
Personal Health	4
Health Care Systems/Strategies	4
Mental Health	3
Psychology	3
General Biology	3
Health Risk/Reduction	3
Death/Dying/Suicide	3
Sophomore Practicum (Community Health)	3
Sociology of Health Care	3
Microbiology	2
Exercise Health Programming	1
Cultural Diversity	1
General Safety	1
Sociology	1
Chemical Dependency	1
Curriculum (HP)	1
Health Issues Women	1
Medical Terminology	1
Health Counseling	1
Ethics	1

Table 3. Model Undergraduate Programs

Course Name	Credit Hours
Internship/Field Experience	3
Community Health-Theory/Practice	3
Program Planning/Evaluation	3
Biostatistic/Epidemiology	3
Research in Community Health/Health Promotion	3
Health	3
Communications/Marketing	3
Computer Applications	3
Drug Education	3
Environmental Health	3
Human Sexuality	3
Electives 3 – 7 hours	3
Total	36-40 hours

Perhaps there are exemplary programs in Health Education that choose not to initiate the SABPAC-approval process (e.g., cost, time, resources). Second, this study sample was limited to those programs in the SABPAC-approval process and in four cases, does not ascertain whether or not these programs actually received SABPAC approval. Third, data was collected only from university bulletins and other print materials sent to the researchers. Although other information needed was requested of departments, some was not forwarded. This impacted analysis in a couple of areas.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested based on the analyses involved in this study. First, for the majority of undergraduate Health Education programs, this information can be utilized in a self-study to determine if courses are meeting SABPAC requirements and tying in the seven competencies of Health Education into core courses. (See Table 3 for a model curriculum of an undergraduate Health Education program based on these analyses.) If interested in the SABPAC approval process, these departments can then design or modify programs to meet SABPAC

approval. It should be noted, however, that since this study was conducted, the SABPAC approval process is undergoing revision. Interested programs should obtain the latest information before undergoing a self-study.

References

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