

**Association of Community Health Nursing Educators (ACHNE) Position Paper
Faculty Qualifications for Community/Public Health Nursing**

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Summary Recommendations

Undergraduate Faculty Qualifications

- Faculty teaching C/PHN courses should demonstrate knowledge and experience in the ANA (2022) *PHN Scope and Standards of Practice* Tier 1 competencies as a minimum.
- Have a Registered Nursing (RN) license
- Faculty teaching C/PHN courses should have at minimum one year experience as a nurse in a community-oriented setting and/or experience working in a community partnership to improve community health.

Preferred qualifications for faculty teaching C/PHN courses would include Demonstrated knowledge and experience in the ANA (2022) *PHN Scope and Standards of Practice* Tier 2 competencies and

Master or doctorate degree with specialization in community or population health nursing or Master of Public Health degree or national Certification in Public Health (CPH)

Graduate Faculty Qualifications

- Teaching community and public health nurses in graduate education requires a diverse skill set encompassing clinical and teaching expertise.
- Nursing faculty teaching community/public health nursing (C/PHN) theory at the graduate level should possess a terminal degree in nursing with specialized graduate-level C/PHN preparation, as recommended by the Association of Community Health Nursing Educators (ACHNE).
- Program leaders for graduate C/PHN programs are ideally doctoral prepared and preferably hold C/PHN specialty nursing certification or equivalent qualifications, as recommended by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC, 2017).
- Nursing faculty teaching at this level should hold an RN license, a doctoral degree in nursing, and demonstrate competency in C/PHN specialty areas.
- Faculty responsible for DNP scholarly projects/products and PhD dissertations should be competent in C/PHN specialty areas.
 - While specific nursing C/PHN certification is no longer available, faculty can exhibit competency through alternative means, such as portfolios showcasing achievements in population-focused care, aligned with AACN's (2021) Essentials Domain 3: Population Health.
 - Ideally, faculty should attain at least 80% competency in advanced level Domain 3 competencies to ensure students receive necessary pedagogical guidance to meet accrediting body requirements and prepare them adequately for their roles in C/PHN.

Background

The Association of Community Health Nursing Educators (ACHNE) is dedicated to advancing community and population health through quality community/public health nursing (C/PHN) education, research, and practice. This position paper describes the minimum and preferred academic and experience that colleges and university nursing programs should consider when hiring or assigning faculty to teach undergraduate and graduate C/PHN courses.

There are no specific guidelines for C/PHN educators in the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE, 2024) proposed revisions to the *Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs* or the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN, 2023) *Accreditation Manual for Nursing Education Programs*. Standards developed by CCNE and ACEN are designed to ensure nursing education programs provide entry-level nurses with the knowledge and skills necessary to begin practice in a variety of care settings, including community and population health.

However, there is consensus among accreditation organizations that faculty must be educationally and experientially qualified (ACEN, 2023; CCNE, 2024). The CCNE (2024) proposed revisions to the *Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs* require accredited nursing programs to have faculty who are academically and experientially prepared for the areas in which they teach. The CCNE (2024) Standard II-F describes academic preparation as “degree specialization, specialty coursework, or other preparation sufficient to address the major concepts included in courses they teach” (p. 11).

The ACEN (2023) Standard 2, Criterion 2.1 requires full-time faculty to “hold certification as applicable and consistent with their assigned roles and responsibilities, and who are experientially qualified for their assigned roles and responsibilities” (p. 3). Specific definitions of education and experience for teaching CPHN undergraduate content or courses are not provided by CCNE or ACEN.

Further, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2017) *Preferred Vision of the Professoriate in Baccalaureate & Graduate Nursing Programs* states “The professoriate of the future is educationally and experientially prepared to teach students and professional nurses to lead change, spur innovation, and transform health care” (p. 1). The AACN (2021a) also supports certification and/or micro credentials of masters and doctoral prepared faculty to demonstrate preparation for teaching.

Methods

The ACHNE Faculty Qualifications Workgroup was developed in the spring of 2023. Association members with experience teaching undergraduate and graduate C/PHN courses were invited to participate in updating the ACHNE (2009) *Position Paper - Academic Faculty Qualifications for Community/Public Health Nursing*. Workgroup members completed a review of the literature and developed a Faculty Qualifications Survey to solicit input from C/PHN faculty and Public Health Nurses, in determining minimum qualifications for CPHN faculty. Two sub-committees were formed, one for undergraduate faculty qualifications and the other for graduate faculty qualifications.

The co-chairs of the Workgroup developed a draft position paper based on data from the literature review, results online survey (See Appendix A), and input from the sub-committees. The draft position paper was then reviewed by the full Workgroup, and the final draft of the position paper was developed and submitted to the ACHNE Executive Committee for review.

Recommendations for Undergraduate Program Faculty Qualifications

The authors of the American Nurses Association (2022) *Public Health Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* are clear that undergraduate baccalaureate nursing education alone is insufficient to prepare RNs for the full scope of C/PHN practice:

A registered nurse entering the public health nursing (PH nursing) specialty, whether as a new graduate or after working in a non-PH nursing setting, will need further experience and education (academic or continuing professional development) to achieve and demonstrate competence in PH nursing (p. 70).

Further, the *Public Health Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (2022) guide what knowledge and experience someone working as a Public Health Nurse should possess. These standards should also guide the skills of someone teaching C/PHN courses.

Minimally, faculty teaching C/PHN in a BSN program should demonstrate knowledge and experience in the ANA (2022) *PHN Scope and Standards of Practice* Tier 1 competencies as a

minimum. Also, faculty teaching CPHN courses should have a minimum of one year of experience as a nurse in a community-oriented setting and/or experience working in a community partnership for the improvement of community or population health outcomes. Preferred qualifications for faculty teaching undergraduate C/PHN courses include demonstrated knowledge and experience in the ANA (2022) *PHN Scope and Standards of Practice Tier 2* competencies and Master or doctorate degree with specialization in community or population health nursing or Master of Public Health degree or national Certification in Public Health (CPH).

To ensure preparation, assessment of knowledge and experience of C/PHN competencies (i.e., Tier 1 or Tier 2) should be done during the faculty candidate interview process. Questions should be posed to candidates to assess their understanding of how C/PHN education and practice has evolved from disease-specific programs to working across sectors and disciplines. Interview questions or a review of post-baccalaureate work experience and education should also address how well-prepared the candidate is

to help promote health equity, reduce health disparities, and improve the health and well-being of everyone..., and ensure that nurses are prepared to understand and identify the social determinants of health, have expanded learning experiences in the community so they can work with different people with varied life experiences and cultural values”

(National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASSEM], 2022, p. 189).

Examples of interview questions and post-baccalaureate work and education to meet undergraduate CPHN faculty qualifications are in Appendix B.

Recommendations for Graduate Program Faculty Qualifications

Nursing faculty teaching at the graduate level should hold an RN license, a doctoral degree in nursing or public health and demonstrate competency in the C/PHN specialty (AACN, 2021b).

Concepts and theory addressing community/public health nursing focusing on aggregates is a requirement in graduate nursing education (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2021b). Nursing faculty teaching C/PHN theory at the graduate level are expected to hold a terminal degree in nursing or public health with specialty graduate-level C/PHN preparation.

The academic preparation applies to all graduate-level education pertaining to C/PHN concepts and theory set forth by accrediting bodies regardless of specialization outside of the C/PHN specialty. Faculty preparation for DNP scholarly project/product oversight requires demonstrated knowledge and experience of community public health theory and program implementation. Faculty preparation for chairing PhD dissertations requires demonstrated knowledge and experience of community public health theory, and research methodology. The competencies will be demonstrated with population groups at the aggregate, not the individual level. An example of competency at the aggregate level may include being a program officer for an intervention focused on the entire population, not only the individual. While there is no specific nursing C/PHN certification, paths for certification may be the CPH or C/PHN sub-specialties, such as school nursing (National Board of Public Health Examiners, 2023).

While nursing certification in C/PHN is no longer an option, faculty teaching in a graduate program can demonstrate competency in various ways. Another way to demonstrate competency would be through a portfolio that demonstrates measurable achievements in population-focused care and needs (Hebert et al., 2022). Faculty should be able to demonstrate competencies in the AACN (2021b) *Essentials Domain 3: Population Health*. Ideally, faculty will have achieved at least 80% competency in the advanced level Domain 3 competencies (Hebert et al., 2022). This competency rating is realistic as we would want our graduate students to have at least this level of competency when they graduate, therefore, we would need to ensure our faculty are competent to teach our students. Having qualified faculty will ensure that students receive the required pedagogical information to meet the competencies identified by accrediting bodies (See Appendix B).

The ACHNE also recommends that the program leader for a graduate program in C/PHN be doctoral prepared and preferably hold C/PHN specialty nursing certification, Certified Public Health (CPH) certification, or have completed the necessary education to otherwise have qualified to sit for an Advanced Public Health Nursing (PHNA-BC) board certification.

Skills needed for Undergraduate and Graduate clinical teaching

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's (2021) *Future of Nursing 2020-2030* provides guidance for nurse educators that "their education needs to provide nursing students with substantive, diverse, and sustained community-based experiences, as well as to substantially reorient curricula and reevaluate hiring and admission practices to achieve a diverse faculty and student population" (p. 8). This can only be accomplished by nurse educators with the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to identify clinical sites where these goals can be met.

Nursing faculty may be required to provide direct supervision to students in community sites, identify and oversee preceptors, or serve as clinical placement coordinators for a nursing program. In each of these roles, the faculty member's expectation would be to develop and support academic/practice partnerships, collaborate with community agencies to create inter-professional practice experiences, and seek out new partners. The Scope and Standards (ANA, 2022) recommend understanding health promotion, disease prevention, assessment at the community level, program management, planning, and evaluation at the population level for those who will be practicing as clinicians or educators. Administrators need the ability to document that faculty serving in these roles have the knowledge, skills, and competencies in each of the areas for transformational learning to occur. One means of documenting faculty's knowledge, skill, and competency is through the Public Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (ANA, 2022).

References

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Appendix A

ACHNE Faculty Qualifications Survey Results (N = 117)

What is your primary role, where you spend the majority of your work time in Community/Public Health Nursing	Percent
Community/Public Health Nursing Undergraduate Faculty	35.9%
Public Health Nurse	16.2%
Community/Public Health Nursing Undergraduate Faculty,	13.7%
Community/Public Health Nursing Undergraduate Clinical Faculty	
Community/Public Health Nursing Graduate Faculty	7.7%
Community/Public Health Nursing Undergraduate Clinical Faculty	4.3%
Community/Public Health Nursing Graduate Clinical Faculty	1.7%
Community/Public Health Nursing Undergraduate Clinical Faculty, Public Health Nurse	1.7%
Community/Public Health Nursing Undergraduate Faculty,	1.7%
Community/Public Health Nursing Graduate Faculty	

Other -	17.1%
Total	100.0

Faculty who teach community/public health nursing courses should have at least one year of work experience in public or community health nursing.	Percent
Strongly agree	65.0%
Somewhat agree	20.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	3.4%
Somewhat disagree	4.3%
Strongly disagree	6.8%
Total	100%

Faculty who teach community/public health nursing courses should be certified in public health (e.g., CPH) or demonstrate a combination of education and experience that has prepared them to teach community/public health nursing courses.	Percent
Strongly agree	47.0%
Somewhat agree	29.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	7.7%
Somewhat disagree	8.5%
Strongly disagree	6.0%
No response	1.7%
Total	100%

Do you believe faculty who teach undergraduate CPHN courses should have experience in public or community health nursing?	Percent
Strongly agree	64.1%
Somewhat agree	24.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	3.4%
Somewhat disagree	2.6%
Strongly disagree	5.1%
Total	100%

Do you believe faculty who teach graduate CPHN courses should have experience in public or community health nursing?	Percent
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Strongly agree	77.8%
Somewhat agree	14.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	2.6%
Somewhat disagree	0.9%
Strongly disagree	4.3%
Total	100%

Do you believe faculty who teach undergraduate CPHN courses should be certified in public health?

	Percent
Strongly agree	11.1%
Somewhat agree	36.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	26.5%
Somewhat disagree	12.8%
Strongly disagree	12.8%
Total	100%

What do you believe should be the minimum qualification for faculty who teach undergraduate CPHN courses? (Select all that apply) ¹

	Percent
At least one year of practice in community/public health nursing	76%
Graduate degree in community, population, public health nursing or MPH	37%
Certification in Public Health (CPH)	17%
Certified Nursing Educator (CNE)	10%
Certification in Public Health Nursing (PHNA-BC) ²	8%
Other	15%

¹ Select all that apply – some participants selected multiple qualifications and therefore the percentages for all qualification statements exceed 100%.

² Certification in Public Health Nursing is no longer available through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). This ANCC certification and credential are available for renewal only.

What do you believe should be the minimum qualification for faculty who teach graduate CPHN courses? (select all that apply) ¹

	Percent
At least one year of practice in community/public health nursing	66%
Graduate degree in community, population, public health nursing or MPH	56%
Certification in Public Health (CPH)	28%
Certification in Public Health Nursing (PHNA-BC) ²	17%

Certified Nursing Educator (CNE)	12%
Other	16%

- ¹ Select all that apply – some participants selected multiple qualifications, and therefore the total of the percentages for all qualification statements exceeds 100%.
- ² Certification in Public Health Nursing is no longer available through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). This ANCC certification and credential are available for renewal only.

Appendix B Sample Interview Questions for CPHN Faculty and Clinical Preceptors

1. Describe your experience with conducting health education, health promotion, risk reduction, and disease prevention programs/services for individuals, families, or groups. Include any ways you were able to use available data or resources related to SDOH.
2. Describe your experiences with program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

3. Describe a time you advocated for a health policy. What was the issue and how was your advocacy done?
4. Talk about when you collaborated with people outside your employer/agency to work on a project or issue.
5. Describe a time you worked as part of a team. How did the team function? What worked well and what did not work well?
6. Describe any experience you have working with any vulnerable populations.
7. Do you have experience working as part of an interprofessional team? If so, what was your experience?

Examples of Post Baccalaureate Education/Certification specific to CPHN competencies

- Association of Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR). Foundations of Population Health Science and Practice - mini-course for public health professionals. <https://www.aptrweb.org/page/foundations>
- National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE). Certification in Public Health Certification in Public Health. <https://www.nbphe.org/>