# Department of Global Health, Stellenbosch University

## Global Health Competencies

**PREAMBLE**

Global health is a field of scholarship and practice seeking to advance health equity by employing a transdisciplinary, inter-sectoral and collaborative approach to address complex health and social problems that cross national borders, and are impacted by transnational forces.

The purpose of this document is to sketch a framework of global health competencies designed to:
- Inform curricular planning
- Serve as a roadmap for global health education
- Prepare prospective students with the skills and competence in global health, and
- Prepare a cadre of professionals to assume roles across local and global health settings.

This document details global health competencies, developed and distilled from several sources (1-3). The list of competencies is clustered around 11 domains (Figure 1) and each domain contains a subset of global health competencies.



Figure 1: Global health competency domains

The competencies are designed to be pitched at four different levels of proficiency (Box) ranging from Level I Global citizen to Level IV Advanced level. The set of domains, competency lists and varying levels of engagement is designed and developed as a dynamic and non-hierarchical framework by the Department of Global Health and is contingent upon context, culture and the epoch within which we operate. The scope, depth and relevance of the domains and global health competencies will be continuously monitored, evaluated and amended as required.

## GLOBAL HEALTH COMPETENCIES

*Each of the 11 domains has a cluster of global health competencies listed within it. There are a total of 49 global health competencies listed, with approximately 3 to 7 per domain.*

### Domain 1: Global Burden of Disease

Competency 1.1: Describe the major causes of communicable and non-communicable disease morbidity, disability and mortality around the world; underlying risk factors; and how the risk of disease and disability rapidly varies with regions and over time.

Competency 1.2: Describe major public, and health promotion, efforts to reduce disparities in global health and Social Determinants of Health (such as Sustainable Development Goals and Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria).

Competency 1.3: Describe how to measure and validate the health status and quality of life of populations using available data (e.g. public health surveillance data, vital statistics, registries, surveys, electronic health records and health plan claims data).

Competency 1.4: Describe and understand health across the life course including the developmental origins of health and disease

### Domain 2: Health Systems, Policy and Internationalisation of Health

Competency 2.1: Describe health systems and different national models for provision of healthcare and their respective effects on health and healthcare expenditure.

Competency 2.2: Describe how global trends in healthcare practice, commerce and culture, multinational agreements and organizations contribute to the quality and availability of health and healthcare locally and internationally.

Competency 2.3: Describe general trends and influences in the global availability of health technology, including pharmaceuticals and assistive devices/products.

Competency 2.4: Describe how travel and trade contribute towards communicable and non-communicable disease patterns.

Competency 2.5: Describe the prevention and control of emerging, re-emerging infectious diseases and vaccinations at global, regional and national levels.

Competency 2.6: Describe policy development, implementation and analysis and how this impacts complex health systems at global, regional and national levels

**Domain 3: Global Health Governance and leadership**
Competency 3.1: Describe global health governance actors, dimensions and complexities, including the roles of international organisations, funders, foundations, the political and commercial sector and civil society.
Competency 3.2: Apply leadership practices that support collaborative practice and team effectiveness.
Competency 3.3: Understand global health networks, their functioning, power, structure, and their effectiveness

**Domain 4: Socioeconomic, environmental and commercial determinants of health**
Competency 4.1: List major social, economic and commercial determinants of health and their impacts on the access to and quality of health services and on differences in morbidity and mortality between and within countries.
Competency 4.2: Describe how cultural context and belief systems influences perceptions of health and disease, disability and behaviours.
Competency 4.3: Describe the relationship between access to and quality of water, sanitation, food (food security) and air on individual and population health.
Competency 4.4: Describe the impact of planetary health and one health on individual and population health.
Competency 4.5: Describe the relationship between people, animals and the environment and the impact on health

**Domain 5: Capacity Strengthening for Health Systems**
Competency 5.1: Co-create strategies with the public health sector, community, industry and community organisations to strengthen stakeholders' capabilities and contribute to reduction in health disparities and improvement of community health.
Competency 5.2: Integrate community and community-level assets and resources to improve the health of individuals and populations.

**Domain 6: Collaboration, Partnership and Communication**
Competency 6.1: Understand the need to include representatives of diverse constituencies in community partnerships and foster reciprocal learning with these partners.
Competency 6.2: Understand the need for diplomacy and build trust with community partners.
Competency 6.3: Understand the need and communicate joint lessons learned to community partners and global constituencies.
Competency 6.4: Exhibit inter-professional values and communication skills that demonstrate respect for, and awareness of, the unique cultures, values, roles/responsibilities and expertise represented by other professionals and groups that work in global health.
Competency 6.5: Acknowledge one's limitations in skills, knowledge, and abilities.

**Domain 7: Ethics and Law**
Competency 7.1: Apply the fundamental principles of international standards for the protection of human subjects in diverse cultural settings.
Competency 7.2: Demonstrate an awareness of local and national codes of ethics relevant to one's working environment.
Competency 7.3: Demonstrate an understanding of and an ability to resolve common ethical issues and challenges that arise in working and researching within diverse economic, political and cultural contexts as well as working with vulnerable populations (including refugees and migrants) in low resource settings to address global health issues.
Competency 7.4: Demonstrate an understanding of relevant international, regional, and local health law and regulations.

**Domain 8: Professional Practice**
Competency 8.1: Demonstrate integrity, regard and respect for others in all aspects of professional practice.
Competency 8.2: Articulate barriers and facilitators to health and healthcare in high, middle or low-income countries.
Competency 8.3: Demonstrate the ability to adapt clinical or discipline-specific skills and practice in a resource-constrained setting.
Competency 8.4: Demonstrate ability to work effectively as members of an interprofessional team.
Competency 8.5: Demonstrate application of their role as health professionals as advocates for health and well-being.

**Domain 9: Health Equity and Social justice**
Competency 9.1: Describe and apply and actively advocate for social justice and human rights principles in addressing global health problems and global health security.
Competency 9.2: Describe and demonstrate how to implement strategies to engage marginalized and vulnerable populations (including refugees and migrants) in making decisions that affect their health and well-being.
Competency 9.3: Demonstrate a basic understanding of the relationship between health, disability, human rights, and global inequities.
Competency 9.4: Describe the role of multilateral health organisations (such as WHO, UNICEF and Global Fund), including relevant international and regional organisations in linking health and human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research involving Human Subjects.
Competency 9.5: Demonstrate a commitment to social responsibility.

**Domain 10: Programme design, implementation and evaluation**
Competency 10.1: Evidence-driven and context specific programme planning, implementation and evaluation.
Competency 10.2: Apply project management techniques throughout program planning, implementation and evaluation.
Competency 10.3 Communicate outputs and outcomes, including recommendations of findings of programme to key stakeholders

**Domain 11: Strategic Analysis**
Competency 11.1: Identify how demographic and other major factors can influence patterns of morbidity, mortality, and disability in a defined population.
Competency 11.2: Conduct a community health needs assessment.
Competency 11.3: Conduct a situational analysis across a range of cultural, economic and health contexts
Competency 11.4: Describe the role, application and importance of health information systems, technology and big data for health systems strengthening.
Competency 11.5: Apply public health research skills to incorporate qualitative, quantitative, and operations research skills to design and apply reliable, valid, and ethically sound research to identify innovative solutions for global health problems.
Competency 11.6: Demonstrate specific global health research competencies include identification of actionable determinants, involving communities, partnering with local institutions, and respecting cultural diversity.
Competency 11.7: Describe and demonstrate translation of research to policy and programs

**References**

1. Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH). MPH Global Health Concentration Competencies Toolkit. ASPPH, 2018.
2. Wilson L, Callender B, Hall TL, Jogerst K, Torres H, Velji A. Identifying global health competencies to prepare 21st century global health professionals: report from the global health competency subcommittee of the consortium of universities for global health. The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics. 2014;42(2_suppl):26-31.
3. Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) Competency Sub-Committee. Global Health Education Competencies tool kit  (2nd edition). Washington, DC: CUGH, 2018.

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