



APHEA

Agency for Public Health
Education Accreditation

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

REVIEW OF

École des Hautes Études en Santé Publique

Rennes, France

Site Visit Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

September 2022

ONLINE SITE VISIT DATES:
Monday 11th & Tuesday 12th JULY, 2022

ONLINE SITE VISIT TEAM:
Professor Henrique Barros (Chair)
Professor Francine Watkins
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Executive Summary

Foreword

The Review Team would like to thank everyone who was involved with and contributed to this institutional reaccreditation of the Ecole des Hautes Études en Santé Publique (EHESP). It would like to especially thank the students and alumni, external stakeholders and partner organisations, the technical and administrative personnel, the academic teams, and the managers and leaders of the programmes and of the organisation. As fellow academics, the Review Team greatly appreciates and values the opportunity to learn from institutions who are members of our global public health education and research community.

Introduction

EHESP is an autonomous public-sector institution that was established in its current form as a school of public health in 2008, following the passing of the French Public Health Act 2004. It operates across two sites, in Rennes since 2008 and in Paris since 2015. EHESP operates as part of France's university network while being under the authority of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and the Ministry of Solidarity and Health. The School provides postgraduate education for master's and doctoral students and specialist training or continuing professional development for executive civil servants employed in public administration, health and social care professions. Education and research within the School transcend the social, environmental and health sciences, and academic research expertise in the School spans health care systems, environmental health, population health, and public policy. The School established education, research and consultancy partnerships across five continents. This report summarises the APHEA review team's findings from undertaking scrutiny of the curriculum validation, the self-evaluation report and its appendices and linked resources and the online site visit with a broad range of key stakeholders.

Criterion I: Governance and Organisation of the Institution

The School evidently has a robust and well-established governance structure that adheres to the requirements of the French state and the higher education system in France. The School is accountable to its external stakeholders, in particular the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and the Ministry of Solidarity and Health. The self-evaluation report submitted by the School explained the associations between the School and the wider French university and political systems that informed its development under the 2004 Public Health Act. It is appreciated that the School endeavours to involve external stakeholders beyond the health and education sectors to extend its reach and responsiveness as an interdisciplinary global public health institution. In this regard, it is recommended that the School continues to expand its involvement and engagement with all the key sectors that represent the broad field of global public health.

At the local level of programme and faculty, lines of governance, accountability and responsibility are less obvious. From an external perspective, it is not evident how governance operates at the local level. In other words, it is unclear who is responsible for education and research strategy and operational management at the curricular and subject group level, including programme and module leadership, design, development, validation, continuous improvement and evaluation. It is understood that these processes do operate, but there could be greater transparency. It is therefore recommended that the School reviews its operational governance systems and processes to provide more transparency about its lines of accountability, including the involvement of students and stakeholders within these processes.

Criterion II: Aims and Objectives of the Public Health Institution and its Programmes

The School offers a range of pathways to students who aspire to study public health, public policy and administration and the range of linked continuing professional development programmes (or specialisms). These are strongly aligned with the public health and health systems of France, with the School's long tradition of providing vocational education and training for civil service professionals. Many students are therefore employed in the health, environmental and social care sectors and study at EHESP on secondment from their employers. The School therefore provides a valuable service to the national and regional workforce with its strong inter-professional links. Consequently, the School has high employability with most graduates in senior level positions. The range of programmes and courses offered by the School, moreover, enable it to remain economically viable. Master's and doctoral programmes attract national and international students, arguably enhanced by being delivered in English. Overall, the School offers a broad repertoire of relevant programmes and modules that prepare a diverse range of students for the field of public health and health administration. In this regard, it is recommended that the School continues to enhance and expand its stakeholder professional networks and alumni relations to maintain the currency of its educational and research provision and its national and international footprint.

Criterion III: Programmes

The School offers a broad portfolio of public health, environmental health, health services administration and health policy programmes as master's, doctoral and lifelong learning courses (or continuing professional development). These have developed in response to the demands of the professional workforce, the various professional competency frameworks that inform public health education and training, and global public health challenges and developments. The school's programmes, modules and research reflect a broad multi- and inter-disciplinary ethos within the School that is consistent with the UN Sustainable Development goals, the values of WHO and the social determinants of health framework. This attracts students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds who evidently benefit from the interdisciplinary networking opportunities afforded through studying in the School.

Processes of curriculum design and development, and teaching, learning and assessment strategy and evaluation could be more explicit, with clearer, more transparent procedures and operational systems that guide them. More specifically, the assessment cycle used within the

School is unclear and it is therefore recommended that assessment processes and regulations could be reviewed and strengthened to provide structure and transparency for students, academic staff and external scrutineers, and to ensure that robust, fair and appropriate processes are adhered to. Similarly, it is recommended that the School develops its own research ethics regulations for managing GDPR, safeguarding, research ethics and governance, and research data management, especially to support students and staff undertaking primary research. This would enable a layer of legal protection for the School and could potentially empower academic staff and students in terms of engaging with and understanding these processes.

Criterion IV: Students and Graduates

For the most part, the programmes in the School have evolved to respond to the demands of the professional public health and health services sectors, especially given the historical legacy of the School in supporting the civil service with its lifelong learning continuous professional development education and training. While regular postgraduate students will tend to have ambitions to seek employment in public health, environmental health or health services related fields, seconded civil servants will be seeking advancement, promotion, specialisation or diversification in their careers.

Student representatives, who represented a broad range of courses, were genuinely positive about their educational experiences within the school. None expressed reservations or regret from studying within the School and indeed student representatives said they enjoyed the opportunity to study alongside others from different and diverse professional and disciplinary backgrounds. This was considered a key strength of the School's programmes and courses.

Student representatives also highlighted differences in the quality of the student experience between studying in Rennes and studying in Paris. Students located in Paris commented that they did not always have access to academic faculty to the same level as those based in Rennes. Given the distance between the two campuses, it was perceived that academic teaching faculty were limited in their capacity to teach effectively in both locations and provide an equivalent learning experience for students based in Paris. It was also suggested that the campus experience in Rennes was superior to that offered in Paris. It is therefore recommended that the experience for Paris based students is reviewed in terms of their academic engagement and well as social, institutional and pastoral support.

A second issue that regular master's students highlighted was the limited opportunity to study alongside professional civil service students due to unsynchronised timetables. It is therefore recommended that scheduling of teaching is reviewed to enhance collaboration and networking opportunities to benefit regular full-time students who are contemplating employment in public health and other allied sectors.

Criterion V: Human Resources and Staffing

The School is supported by a well-qualified, agile and dedicated academic Faculty where there appears to be strong camaraderie and collegiality between academic staff. The ratio of

academic staff to students appears to be appropriate and staff have a wide range of disciplinary, research and professional experience evidenced through their CVs.

Academics tend to orient themselves towards a teaching or research career trajectory and each “route” brings challenges and opportunities. From speaking with a group of academic staff, it emerged that the programme leader or coordinator role can become administratively heavy in terms of workload, especially when supporting diverse groups of students. Taking responsibility for leading teaching programmes can impact an individual’s research career trajectory given the hidden workload associated with having to manage curricular activities and processes. While academics appear to have latitude and freedom in terms of designing, evolving and evaluating their programmes and modules, the extent of responsibility here may be underappreciated.

Academic roles, accountabilities and status were quite difficult to interpret within the School structure and hierarchy. It was understood that professors can be appointed internally or externally, the latter appointed by the Ministries of Education and Health to legitimise, represent and provide leadership for specific professional educational competencies that are recognised as essential to the delivery of the School’s programmes. It was unclear to the review team how professors are appointed and their role and involvement in programme and module design and delivery, and whether there was distinction between professors of education and professors of research. It is therefore recommended that greater clarity is provided regarding academic leadership roles and accountabilities, including how teaching and research roles are delineated within the School.

The School does not appear to have a formal professional development strategy for staff based on appraisal or continuous improvement. It is recommended that a formal system of professional development be considered along with the opportunity for teaching academics to attain a higher education teaching qualification as, for example, is now required in other European universities. Professional development could then be linked to academic probation and promotion.

Criterion VI: Supportive Services, Budgeting and Facilities

It is recognised that the School has significantly developed and improved its teaching, learning and pastoral facilities for students since the previous accreditation. It is also operating to its “sustainable business model” and the School is well supported by the Ministry of Health given its workforce training responsibilities.

Provision of online teaching and learning resources has been greatly expanded for students on both campuses. Teaching facilities appear to be state-of-the-art in terms of technology enhanced, digital learning. The dedicated Pedagogic Support Centre is also a very positive

innovation with the increased emphasis on digital learning, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As highlighted previously, there remains a need to enhance the student experience for Paris based students, in terms of both academic engagement and social and welfare support.

Also, as highlighted previously, it is recommended that teaching could be better aligned across modules so that regular students and civil servant trainees can be taught together, enhancing the networking and learning potential for students.

Criterion VII: Internal Quality Management

The School evidently has a democratic ethos whereby voices of staff and students are highly valued. This operates in an informal way within the School such that students are invited to evaluate the teaching and learning experience, although there do not appear to be formalised structures and processes for evaluation and continuous improvement. It is evident that faculty staff meet regularly to collectively plan and evaluate at programmatic and modular levels although, again, there do not appear to be formal processes or systems to guide these.

The School has nevertheless introduced a new quality management system based on the ISO 9001 standard. There is evidently a commitment to ensure that stakeholders are involved in developmental and operational processes within the School. At present, the School quality strategy appears to be in its early stages of development. Teaching and learning are by default evaluated using summative questionnaires and feedback. The School shows a genuine commitment towards building quality into all of its systems, especially in terms of delivering continuous improvement. However, quality management in the School is focused primarily on pedagogy and the delivery of programmes and modules, essentially as process and outcome evaluation of teaching and assessment processes. The School does not appear to evaluate wider student experience, which could be developed as a feature of continuous improvement to assist with external marketing and recruitment. The School could consider developing operational level processes and procedures to inform and drive the various academic quality cycles – curriculum development and enhancement, teaching, learning and assessment strategies, student feedback, module and programme evaluation, etc.

Summary of Conclusions

| Criterion I: Governance and Organisation of the Institution | |
|--|-------------------|
| Sub - Criterion 1.1 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 1.2 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 1.3 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 1.4 | Met with comments |
| Criterion II: Aims and Objectives of the Public Health Institution and its Programmes | |
| Sub - Criterion 2.1 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 2.2 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 2.3 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 2.4 | Met |
| Criterion III: Programmes | |
| Sub - Criterion 3.1 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 3.2 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 3.3 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 3.4 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 3.5 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 3.6 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 3.7 | Met |
| Criterion IV: Students and Graduates | |
| Sub - Criterion 4.1 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 4.2 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 4.3 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 4.4 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 4.5 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 4.6 | Met with comments |
| Criterion V: Human Resources and Staffing | |
| Sub - Criterion 5.1 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 5.2 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 5.3 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 5.4 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 5.5 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 5.6 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 5.7 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 5.8 | Met with comments |
| Criterion VI: Supportive Services, Budgeting and Facilities | |
| Sub - Criterion 6.1 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 6.2 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 6.3 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 6.4 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 6.5 | Met with comments |
| Criterion VII: Internal Quality Management | |
| Sub - Criterion 7.1 | Met |
| Sub - Criterion 7.2 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 7.3 | Met with comments |
| Sub - Criterion 7.4 | Met |