

Excerpts from:



TrainingFinder Real-time Affiliate Integrated Network (TRAIN) Course Provider Reference Guide

Version 1.2 (9/15/04)
Public Health Foundation



Assigning Skill Levels to Courses

All course providers must assign one of three skill levels to each course listed on TRAIN. The three TRAIN skill levels—"Aware," "Knowledgeable," and "Advanced"—are modified from the skill levels use in the [Core Competecies for Pulbic Health Professionals](http://www.train.org/competencies) (<http://www.train.org/competencies>). Using the guidance below, choose the level that best describes your course. For a summary, see the [Quick Reference Chart](#) on the next page. Please keep in mind that the course hours are meant as a general guide only. Content coverage per competency may vary based on competency selected, target audience, course format, and the level of mastery. The higher the skill level assigned to a course, the more restrictions there are on the number and specificity of competencies that can be assigned to it.

1. **Aware:** An "Aware" level course provides an introductory topic overview that is appropriate for general or multiple audiences and may offer self-testing of knowledge acquired. The course is typically less than 90 minutes. It may describe steps involved in a skill, but usually does not offer skill practice time. Assignment of competencies to the course is optional, with no restrictions on the number of appropriate competencies that can be assigned. For the Core Competencies organized by eight "domains," assignment at the domain level ("within this domain") is permitted.
2. **Knowledgeable:** A course at this level provides comprehensive information or skills appropriate for specific job duties of a target audience (e.g., nurses, health educators). This course may provide practice-related exercises and simulations. Self-testing or observational feedback must be offered to evaluate skill development. This intermediate level course is typically between 90 minutes and eight hours in length. Assignment of individual Core Competencies is optional. For each competency assigned, a corresponding 90 minutes of course material is generally expected to be covered. A maximum of 10 Core Competencies and five Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness competencies may be assigned for this level course.
3. **Advanced:** An "Advanced" course provides intensive instruction, reinforcement of skills, and evaluation against an observable or measurable performance standard. The course must provide practice-related exercises and simulations. A graded exam, practice, or drill must be offered to verify skills and knowledge learned in the course. This course typically ranges from eight hours to a semester or more in length. This course is geared towards building proficiency and may be part of a larger curriculum with prerequisites. Assignment of individual competencies, as appropriate, is required for this level of course. For each competency assigned, a corresponding eight hours of course material is generally expected to be covered. A maximum of five competencies can be assigned for this level course.

Skill Levels – Quick Reference Chart

Below is a summary of the guidance on the previous page regarding selecting skill levels. In selecting a skill level, please keep in mind that the course hours are meant as a general guide only. Content coverage per competency may vary based on competency selected, target audience, course format, and the level of mastery.

After first selecting the skill level, you have an option to assign either the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals (Core) or the Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness Competencies (BT/ER). If your course is not competency based, you should select “Not Applicable.”

Suggested Assessment Factors	Aware	Knowledgeable	Advanced
Skills Practice / Demonstration	Not required	Encouraged	Required
Related to Job Duties of Target Audience	Encouraged	Required	Required
Course Length (Estimated)	30- 90 Minutes*	90 Minutes – 8 Hours*	8 Hours – Semester*
Assignment of Competencies to Course	Encouraged	Encouraged	Required
Number of Competencies	Unlimited*	Up to 10 Core* Up to 5 BT/ER*	Up to 5*
Assessment (Pre / Post)	Not required	Encouraged	Required
Self-Testing or Observational Feedback	Encouraged	Required	Required
Graded Exam / Performance Evaluation	Not required	Encouraged	Required
Credit	Not required	Encouraged	Encouraged
Performance Based Certificate	Not required	Not required	Encouraged

* General content coverage per competency may vary based on competency selected, target audience, course format, and the level of mastery.

Assigning Competencies to Courses

Why Assign Competencies in TRAIN?

The competency sets used in TRAIN have been shortened or condensed to make it quick and easy for course providers to assign them when listing courses. With just a few extra clicks to assign relevant competencies to your courses, everyone benefits—course providers, learners, and public health organizations at all levels.

Competency-based training is in high demand. Most leading public health organizations recommend—or even require—competency-based training for their workforce or grantees. Many public health professionals are assessed according to the competencies used in TRAIN and are looking for courses by competency to help them achieve their learning goals. As the field of public health becomes more competency-driven, courses readily identified with specific competencies will have an edge.

Learners count on TRAIN to find and track courses by competency. Learners can search TRAIN by competency domains and view the individual competencies (if assigned to the course) before selecting a course. After learners complete courses, TRAIN can track course-related competencies in learners' personal transcripts.

TRAIN's competency-based course database supports the public health field. Federal, state, local, academic, and other organizations will rely on the competency data in TRAIN to analyze course availability gaps and course development needs by competency. An accurate assignment of relevant competencies helps public health leaders and funders avoid duplication and know which courses are most important to develop in the future. TRAIN provides a consistent competency framework to which other competency efforts and learning management systems can “map back” their course or learning data, representing the consensus of many academic and practice organizations.

Which Competencies Are Listed in TRAIN?

Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals
Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice

The Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (Council) is committed to assisting the U.S. Public Health Service in efforts to implement components of [The Public Health Workforce: An Agenda for the 21st Century](http://198.102.218.57/phfunctions/pubhlth.pdf) (<http://198.102.218.57/phfunctions/pubhlth.pdf>) report pertaining to public health competencies. To this end the Council developed a list of Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals. This list represents ten years of work on this subject by the Council and numerous other organizations and individuals in public health academia and practice settings. Their work has been compiled from various source documents and cross-walked with the ten Essential Public Health Services. This cross-walk ensures that the competencies help build the skills necessary for providing these essential services. For more information on the Council and the Core Competencies please visit the Core Competencies website. See also, p. 32 of this guide for the shortened list of Core Competencies used in TRAIN.

Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness
Columbia University School of Nursing Center for Health Policy

Assuring that the nation's public health workforce is ready to respond to emergencies has been a key focus of action and research for the past several years. Emergency preparedness training of public health workers is being designed to assure that all workers have the competencies needed for an effective response. "Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness: Competencies for all Public Health Workers" is the result of two years of research under the direction of Kristine M. Gebbie, RN, Dr.PH, funded by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.phppo.cdc.gov) (<http://www.phppo.cdc.gov>) These competencies build on the core emergency preparedness competencies developed by the [Center for Health Policy](http://www.nursing.hs.columbia.edu/institute-centers/chphsr/index.html) (<http://www.nursing.hs.columbia.edu/institute-centers/chphsr/index.html>) in 2000 and have been used by the Mailman School of Public Health [Center for Public Health Preparedness](http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/sph/CPHP/index.html) (<http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/sph/CPHP/index.html>) and other preparedness centers in their training activities. The shortened list of the Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness Competencies used in TRAIN can be found on p. 33 of this guide.

NOTE: This information is used with permission from the [Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness Competencies](http://www.nursing.hs.columbia.edu/institute-centers/chphsr/index.html) website (<http://www.nursing.hs.columbia.edu/institute-centers/chphsr/index.html>).

Do Competencies Apply to Every Course?

No. Unless a course is specifically designed to achieve the Core Competencies or is related to bioterrorism and emergency readiness, course providers should select “Not Applicable” and skip the competencies section when entering a course on TRAIN.

Choose “Not Applicable” for the Core Competencies if:

- the course provides information updates or skills needed for specific issues (e.g., tuberculosis treatment, Medicaid regulations, or environmental health strategies) and
- is not meant to build core competencies that can be applied across a variety of public health issues.

Only courses in the “Terrorism / Emergency Readiness” subject area can be assigned Bioterrorism and Emergencies Readiness competencies.

Competency-based courses may use other competency sets besides those in TRAIN. PHF currently has no plans to formally integrate additional discipline-specific competency sets into TRAIN. To help learners find courses based on other competency sets, training providers are encouraged to list related competencies in the course description, which learners can search by keyword.

Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals

TRAIN uses the following list of Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals.*

For “Aware”-level courses, course providers may choose to select competencies at the “domain level” for one or more of the eight domains below, instead of assigning individual competencies to a course.

Addresses competencies (unspecified) within the domains listed below

- Analytic/ Assessment Skills
- Policy Development / Program Planning Skills
- Communication Skills
- Cultural Competency Skills

- Community Dimensions of Practice Skills
- Basic Public Health Sciences Skills
- Financial Planning and Management Skills
- Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

Choose one
(for “Aware”-
level courses
only)

Addresses specific competencies below:

Analytic/ Assessment Skills

- Defines a problem
- Determines data uses and limitations
- Selects and defines variables
- Identifies data sources
- Evaluates data and identifies gaps
- Applies ethical principles to data
- Community partnering about data collected
- Makes inferences from data
- Obtain and interpret risks/benefits
- Applies data collection processes
- Recognizes data’s effect on public health

Policy Development / Program Planning Skills

- Collects and interprets information
- Writes clear policy options or statements
- Identifies public health laws and regulations
- Articulates implications of policy
- States expected outcomes of policy
- Utilizes current decision analysis techniques
- Decides appropriate actions
- Develops a plan to implement policy
- Translates policy into organization plans and programs
- Prepares and implements emergency response plans
- Develops evaluation programs

Communication Skills

- Communicates effectively
- Solicits input from relevant partners
- Advocates for public health and resources
- Leads and participates in groups
- Communicates by media, technology, and networks
- Presents information accurately
- Listens, respects and promotes other perspectives

Cultural Competency Skills

- Interacts appropriately towards all persons
- Identifies factors that determine public health delivery
- Develops and adapts approaches inclusive to culture
- Understands cultural diversity
- Understands the importance of a diverse workforce

Community Dimensions of Practice Skills

- Maintains linkages with key stakeholders
- Utilizes leadership skills to build partnerships
- Collaborates to promote public health
- Identifies operations of public and private organizations

- Accomplishes effective community engagements
- Identifies community assets and resources
- Develops, implements, and evaluates community assessment
- Describes governments role in public health delivery

Basic Public Health Sciences Skills

- Identifies responsibilities within Essential Public Health Services
- Defines health status, determinants and factors influencing prevention and use of health services
- Understands the historical development of health systems
- Identifies and applies public health research methods
- Applies basic health sciences
- Identifies and retrieves current relevant scientific evidence
- Identifies research limitations, observations and interrelationships
- Develops a commitment to critical thinking

Financial Planning and Management Skills

- Develops and presents a budget
- Manages programs within budget constraints
- Applies budget processes
- Develops strategies for budget priorities
- Monitors program performance
- Prepares proposals for external funding
- Applies human relation skills to program management
- Manages information systems
- Negotiates and develops contracts for services
- Conducts cost analyses for effectiveness, benefit, and utility

Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

- Creates a culture of ethical standards
- Helps create key values and shared vision to guide action
- Identifies internal and external issues that impact delivery of essential public health services
- Facilitates collaboration with groups and key stakeholders
- Promotes team and organizational learning
- Contributes to organizational performance standards
- Uses legal and political systems to effect change
- Applies organizational theory to professional practice

* This list is based upon the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals, developed by the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice, www.trainingfinder.org/competencies.

Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness Competencies (Consolidated & Shortened)

TRAIN uses the following list of Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness (BT/ER) competencies.*

Core BT/ER Competencies		Related Sub-Competencies
		The following consolidated sub-competencies are for reference only and cannot be assigned individually to a course.
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Describe the public health role in emergency response in a range of emergencies that might arise.	Communicate public health information and roles accurately to all emergency response partners. Evaluate and review the public health laws of the jurisdiction on a regular schedule.
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Describe the chain of command in emergency response.	Describe the chain of command and management system for emergency response. Maintain regular communication and agreements with emergency response partners.
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Identify and locate the agency emergency response plan.	Ensure that the agency has a written, updated and available plan for major categories of emergencies. Identify specific resources needed for response to critical biologic agents.
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Describe individual functional role(s) in emergency response and demonstrate the role(s) in regular drills.	Identify your functional role in the agency's bioterrorism and emergency response plan.
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Demonstrate correct use of all communication equipment for emergency communication (phone, fax, radio, etc).	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Describe communication role(s) in emergency response within the agency, using established communication systems for the agency, general public, personal and media.	Establish and evaluate a public health communication infrastructure for decision support during a bioterrorism or emergency event. Ensure development and delivery of accurate risk communication messages during a bioterrorism or emergency event.
<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Identify limits to own knowledge, skills, and authority, and identify key systems for referring matters that exceed these limits.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	Recognize unusual events that might indicate an emergency and describe appropriate action.	Participate in continuing education to maintain up to date knowledge.
<input type="checkbox"/> 9	Apply creative problem solving and flexible thinking to unusual challenges within an individuals functional responsibility and evaluate effectiveness of all actions taken.	Apply appropriate public health measures to ensure continued population protection.

* This list is based on the [Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness Competencies](http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nursing/institute-centers/chphsr/btcomps.html) developed by the Columbia University School of Nursing Center for Health Policy, funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nursing/institute-centers/chphsr/btcomps.html>.