An important element in the distance learning experience is the cohort model, in which students are admitted to the program and move through the core courses as a group. This approach enhances learning through the sharing of diverse professional backgrounds, peer support in problem solving, and the creation of stable groups for team-based project class work which promotes leadership skills such as negotiation, communication, and decision-making.

As a school-wide endeavor, the DrPH program is governed by an Oversight Committee, comprised of DrPH Program Director, representatives from each of the School’s four divisions and the Dean’s Office, and students. In its oversight role, the Committee advises the Dean’s Office on all matters regarding the DrPH program curriculum, admissions, student status and progress, and policy level administrative matters. The two student members (each from a different cohort) are elected annually by peers to serve as members of the Committee and participate in all committee business, except that involving the status of specific students. The student representatives serve as liaisons to the DrPH student body in communicating information and soliciting feedback.

### COMPETENCIES FOR THE DrPH DEGREE

The University of Illinois School of Public Health DrPH program is competency-driven, following the recommendations of the Association of Schools of Public Health for the Doctor of Public Health degree. The competencies reflect the perspective on leadership of the UIC DrPH program. The curriculum has been designed around six competencies that have been recognized as essential to successful leadership in the public health field. In completing the curriculum, students will achieve a level of mastery for each competency, though it is recognized that each student will approach the competencies from an individual perspective in line with his/her academic and professional background, interests, and leadership goals.

The six competencies are:

**Competency 1: Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the core areas of public health practice, research, and theory.**

a. Analyze and critique public health as a system, including the specific functions and roles of government (including but not limited to governmental public health agencies) and other, non-governmental partners, assessing the system’s ability to respond to public health problems and its limitations, and identifying ways to improve the system.

b. Integrate and apply multidisciplinary theories and research findings to solve a public health problem(s).

c. Demonstrate an understanding of the ecological model and how it guides the assessment of, and solutions to, public health issues.

d. Demonstrate an understanding of the legal basis for public health.
**Competency 2:** Analyze issues and problems in public health using needs/resource assessments, critical evaluation, applied research methodology, and statistical methods.

a. Obtain, synthesize and interpret appropriate quantitative, qualitative and economic measures and data from multiple sources to address public health problems.

b. Demonstrate in-depth understanding through use of an applied research design and methods of analysis (quantitative, qualitative or economic research methods) to a public health problem or issue.

**Competency 3:** Synthesize information from a variety of sources to assess significance, identify relationships, and develop strategies for addressing public health problems/issues in an area of interest or specialization in a manner that contributes to the evidence base of public health practice and public health scholarship.

a. Identify and apply foundational theories in an area of specialization to explain and predict public health problems and solutions.

b. Develop and apply measures of population health and illness, including risk factors, in the development of community health improvement initiatives, taking into account appropriate cultural, social, behavioral, and biological factors.

c. Develop and apply a logic model, or other systems applications, demonstrating the interrelationships among risk and protective factors, as well as between process and outcome objectives, and targets/standards for population health.

d. Apply research, evaluation and strategic planning designs to address a public health issue in an area of specialization.

**Competency 4:** Demonstrate leadership in designing and implementing policies, strategies and interventions which address a significant public health problem/issue.

a. Demonstrate an ability to strategically plan, implement and evaluate agency performance and organizational improvements.

b. Demonstrate an understanding of the political, social and economic factors influencing the development of, and changes in, public health programs, agencies, or interventions as well as strategies to positively affect those factors.

c. Apply principles and tools of financial, human resource, and information systems management to public health organizations and agencies.

d. Demonstrate an ability to lead and manage individuals or teams in the design, implementation and evaluation of public health programs.
e. Access and synthesize information from a variety of sources to make evidenced-based program decisions.

f. Demonstrate an appreciation of cultural factors and their role in the design of policies and programs.

g. Demonstrate an understanding of the policy process, the use of evidence (scientific, stakeholder input, and public opinion) to inform policy decisions, and how negotiation, advocacy, and consensus building can influence the process.

**Competency 5: Demonstrate the ability to assess communication strategies and use communication skills across diverse audiences to inform and influence program and policy decisions.**

a. Demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical elements of effective communication.

b. Organize and present qualitative, quantitative and economic data cogently and persuasively at scientific sessions and to lay audiences.

c. Design oral and written communications for varied audiences (community and business leaders, the public, policy makers, public health professionals, the media, and other stakeholders).

d. Demonstrate an ability to develop a social marketing plan for a new or existing intervention.

**Competency 6: Demonstrate a vision and philosophy for professional leadership in public health.**

a. Apply principles of systems thinking and effective organizational leadership to create a shared vision that drives change, fosters innovation and builds partnerships, which maximize achievement of public health goals.

b. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical dimensions of public health practice and leadership.

c. Identify personal leadership style and traits, and refine professional skills to improve leadership capacity.

d. Analyze a leadership situation and the performance of those in leadership positions, and provide coaching toward leadership improvement.