

MSO 6136: INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

ONLINE COURSE OUTLINE – SUMMER 2013

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The online course MSO 6136, entitled Introduction to Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was developed by expert professionals working at the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP), the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ) and the Université de Montréal (U of M). It is part of the graduate-level Microprogram in Public Health offered by the Initiative sur le partage des connaissances et le développement des compétences en santé publique (IPCDC) – the public health knowledge sharing and skills development initiative – and is among the courses offered by the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine within the U of M's Faculty of Medicine.

During the 2013 summer session, the course MSO 6136 will be offered in English from May 1st to June 11th, 2013.

The professor responsible for the course is Dr. Richard Massé, Associate Professor in the Département de médecine sociale et préventive at the UdeM and Director of Public Health for the Montréal region. He can be reached at (rmasse@santepub-mtl.qc.ca). However, for all questions concerning course activities, please communicate first with Julie Castonguay, the course tutor, (julie.castonguay@inspq.qc.ca).

INTRODUCTION

HIA is generally defined as a combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, program or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health and well-being of a population (European Centre for Health Policy, 1999). The effective practice of HIA makes it possible to minimize negative and maximize positive health effects. Despite the growing popularity of HIA throughout the world, there are few accredited North-American based online training opportunities available.

It was within this context that the course MSO 6136 was developed by the NCCHPP, the INSPQ and Dr. Richard Massé, in collaboration with a number of other partners. The course aims, among other things, to assist participants in developing and enhancing the competencies required to properly conduct an HIA of public policies, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Most of the content presented is equally relevant to the analysis of programs and projects.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The course is intended for those who wish to gain knowledge about the HIA of public policies. It is aimed, in particular, at practitioners working in public health and in other related sectors, as well as at decision makers, including:

- Professionals and practitioners interested in public policies and their impact on population health,

- Professionals and practitioners working in the field of assessment, including HIA,
- Professionals responsible for conducting HIAs within their organization, and
- Professionals and researchers working in the field of health and social services and in public health, in particular.

The course will be offered to a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 students per session.

PREREQUISITES

The eligibility requirements are as follows. Candidates should:

- Possess an undergraduate degree relevant to the field of public health or an equivalent degree;
- Have been employed for at least one year by an institution that provides public health services or addresses public health issues, or possess equivalent experience;
- Have sufficient knowledge of written and spoken English.

In addition, to ensure better understanding of the course content, we ask that candidates be familiar with:

- The basic concepts of population health
- Sources of information about public health:
 - Canadian Virtual Health Library, HLWIKI Canada, PubMed, Global Health and Health Policy Reference Center, sources of grey literature, reference sites for HIA...

For all questions concerning the eligibility requirements, candidates are encouraged to consult the course tutor, Julie Castonguay, for individual evaluation and, if eligible, to then obtain authorization from the course professor to register.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The main competency elements are described below:

1. Apply the fundamentals of HIA

- Describe the different models of HIA,
- Identify health determinants given a particular scenario
- Determine where health impact assessment fits in among the steps in the policy analysis cycle
- Choose a representative intersectoral working group.

2. Develop a high-quality HIA

- Make use of screening and scoping tools
- Produce a logical framework
- Make use of available sources of information about public health
- Summarize a synthesis report
- Enumerate the quality criteria of an HIA
- Be familiar with the contextual elements that promote successful implementation of the practice of HIA

- Detail the project management process.

3. Detail the knowledge-sharing and decision-making processes

- Identify the various sources of influence inherent in any decision making process
- Establish the conditions for vulgarized and transparent communication with a view to supporting informed decision making
- Determine whether a knowledge-sharing plan adequately responds to the needs and the level of the stakeholders for whom the HIA is intended.

CONTENT OF LEARNING UNITS

The course content is structured according to three broad themes:

- Historical, methodological and scientific bases of HIA (Module 2)
- High-quality HIA processes (Module 3)
- Knowledge sharing and decision making (Module 4).

COURSE OVERVIEW (SEE APPENDIX)

Before we begin — word of welcome, course description, team, road map, assistance, evaluation of the course, graded coursework.

Module 1: Introduction — become familiar with the course environment, understand the requirements and make a workplan.

Module 2: Historical, methodological and scientific bases of HIA

- 2.1. Why HIA?
- 2.2. History and evolution of HIA
- 2.3. Types of impact assessment and HIA models
- 2.4. Health determinants
- 2.5. Public policy development process
- 2.6. Intersectoral collaboration and the role of the community

Module 3: A high-quality HIA process

- 3.1. Screening
- 3.2. Scoping
- 3.3. Analysis
- 3.4. Recommendations
- 3.5. Evaluation and monitoring
- 3.6. Principles and standards of a high-quality HIA
- 3.7. Implementation conditions
- 3.8. Project management

Module 4: Knowledge sharing and decision making

- 4.1. The decision-making process
- 4.2. Knowledge brokering
- 4.3. Knowledge sharing

METHODS OF EVALUATION AND ACADEMIC CREDITS

Evaluation for the course MSO 6136 will focus on the following elements:

1. Participation in a discussion forum: 15%
2. Answers to a multiple choice questionnaire: 15%
3. Course participation and completion of short written assignments to be sent to the course tutor: 20%
4. Final assignment: 50%

At the end of the course, students are invited to evaluate all aspects of the online training. The comments submitted will allow us to improve the course content.

The U of M awards 1 graduate-level credit to students who have successfully completed the 45 hours of work (15 hours online and 30 hours of personal work) performed over a 6-week period.

Note concerning integrity, plagiarism or fraud: All students are invited to consult the website <http://www.integrite.umontreal.ca/> and to take note of the *Règlement disciplinaire sur le plagiat ou la fraude concernant les étudiants*.

Plagiarizing can result in a failing grade, in suspension or in expulsion from the university.

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

This course has been designed using a competency-based approach. To define the course's content, the course development working group first produced an inventory of required competencies, in consultation with HIA theoreticians and practitioners. Next the group outlined a course structure that would allow for assimilation of the various elements of knowledge required for the practice of HIA (theoretical knowledge, tacit knowledge, attitudes). Various specialists were then commissioned to write the course material.

The learning method selected for this course is **online training** guided by a tutor. The online tutor is a professional with the public health and HIA competencies required to provide online support. The tutor is available to answer students' questions and discuss their concerns, as well as to guide students in their processes of reflection, analysis, discussion, communication, planning and design. The tutor will communicate with students through private messaging and by means of a discussion forum.

The learning environment is designed to be interactive (guided discussion forums with feedback from the tutor, messaging) and to include individual study (reading online material

and scientific articles, situational scenarios, reflective exercises, short questionnaires, and a final project), interprofessional collaboration and reliance on experts.

The course includes five modules and several multimedia learning units. The various activities are grouped together in weekly programs.

Students will set their own pace of learning for each week's program, based on their availability. Communication will be asynchronous (not in real time) which will allow students to communicate with each other and with the tutor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The tutor will respond within a timeframe determined at the start of the course.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

These exercises, contained within the learning units, will make it possible to verify whether the material has been understood. When appropriate, students will receive automatic feedback (detailed answers) following completion of the exercises.

DISCUSSION FORUM

The discussion forum is a discussion space available on the university's learning platform (StudiUM). This technology is asynchronous, that is, messages are written or consulted at each student's convenience. A delay in answering should thus be expected. Participants can review the text of a message several times before writing their answer. Students should first look over the learning unit that corresponds to the activity under discussion to allow them to participate effectively in the forum.

The aim of the forum is to allow course participants to share ideas, as well as to argue their own points of view.

Two criteria will be taken into consideration when evaluating the quality of participation: (1) the ability to analyze and synthesize and (2) the formulation of arguments. A quantitative evaluation will be based on the number of messages written (in accordance with the guidelines) as well as on the number of lines written.

COURSE PARTICIPATION AND COMPLETION OF SHORT WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Participation in the various activities proposed throughout the course, as well as the completion of short written assignments to be sent to the tutor will allow students to assimilate the course content and communicate with other participants on an ongoing basis. The feedback provided by the tutor is essential. This guidance ensures the successful completion of the learning process.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT

Students must submit a written report based on a case study. The case study describes a real or fictional problem and requires students to produce a diagnosis, propose solutions and derive rules or principles that would be applicable to similar cases. Case studies allow students to build awareness of their own strategies, to experiment with newly-learned

material, to identify their strengths and weaknesses, to develop their autonomy, their confidence, their capacity for critical and creative reasoning, their decision-making capabilities, etc. (Source: Éric Gagné, Gestion de l'éducation et de la formation, Université de Sherbrooke).

COURSE CALENDAR

Students will have 6 weeks to complete the course. As adult learners, each student will be responsible for his or her own learning process. Students should nevertheless factor in the time required to read and study the content of each learning unit, complete the assignments and participate in group discussions. It is important to respect the proposed calendar so that discussions among students can be synchronized. Below is an overview of the schedule:

Study week	Module to be studied and evaluation activities
First May 1 to 7	Before we begin, Modules 1 and 2
Second May 8 to 14	Module 2 (continued) Participation in the discussion forum: 15% of grade
Third May 15 to 21	Answers to multiple choice questionnaire: 15% of grade Module 3
Forth May 22 to 28	Module 3 (continued)
Fifth May 29 to June 4	Start of final assignment Module 4
Sixth June 5 to 11	Module 4 (continued)
Students will have until June 18, 2013 to submit their final assignment which counts for 50% of their final grade	

Note: Ongoing course participation and completion of short written assignments to be sent to the tutor will count for 20% of the student's grade.

MAIN REFERENCES

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ONLINE INTRODUCTORY COURSE ON THE HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)

Prerequisites

- Basic concepts of population health
- Available sources of public health information

Time required

- 15 hours online
- 30 hours of individual work
- For a total of 45 hours

Evaluation of coursework

- 15% discussion forums focused on health determinants
- 15% multiple choice questionnaire at the end of module 2
- 20% active participation
- 50% on final integrative project based on case study

1 academic credit

Before we begin
and
Module 1
Introduction
Approx. 1h

Unit 1.1
General information
and round of
introduction of
participants, work
planning

Module 2
Historical, methodological and scientific bases of HIA
Approx. 10h

Unit 2.1
Why HIA?

Unit 2.2
History and
evolution of
HIA

Unit 2.3
Types of IA
HIA models

Unit 2.4
Health
determinants

Unit 2.5
Public policy
development process

Unit 2.6
Intersectoral
collaboration
Role of the
community

Module 3
A high-quality HIA process
Approx. 13h

Unit 3.1
Screening

Unit 3.2
Scoping

Unit 3.3
Analysis

Unit 3.4
Recommendations

Unit 3.5
Evaluation &
monitoring

Unit 3.7
Implementation
conditions

Unit 3.6
Principles and
standards of a high-
quality HIA

Unit 3.8
Project
management

Module 4
Knowledge sharing and decision making
Approx. 11h

Unit 4.1
Decision-making
process

Unit 4.2
Knowledge
brokering

Unit 4.3
Knowledge
sharing

Final project
Approx. 10h