

Developing a Research Trainee Competency Framework in Population Health: A Student-Led Initiative

Presenting Authors:

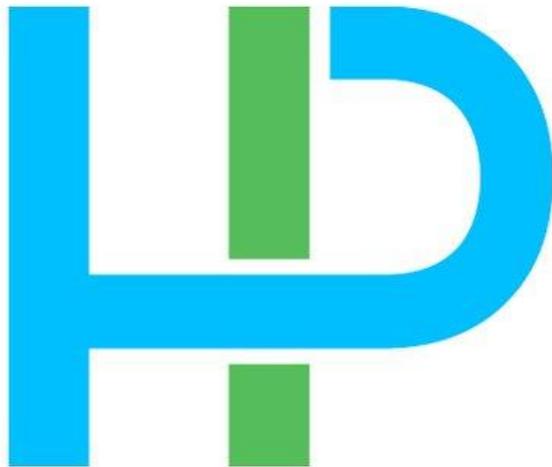
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The Healthy Populations Institute (HPI)

- Senate-approved research institute at Dalhousie University
- Formally the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre
- 4 research clusters: Youth & Healthy Aging, Indigenous Health & Wellbeing, Marginalized Populations, and Implementation Science

Student Research Scholars

- New student membership developed after renewal process
- Membership criteria, roles & responsibilities, and opportunities/benefits...



Criteria for Student Research Scholar Membership

One of the following criteria must be met:

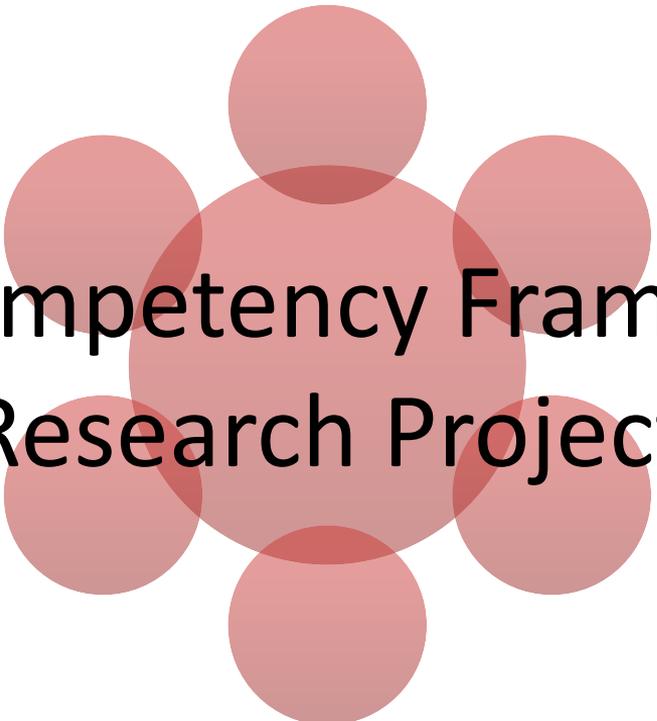
- Must be a graduate student in the Faculties of Health Professions, Medicine, or Dentistry,
- And/or any graduate student from other faculties whose supervisor is either a HPI Senior or Associate research scholar

Roles and Responsibilities

- Attend (when possible) HPI-hosted events (e.g., public events).
- Manage and/or assist with the organization of one HPI-hosted event (e.g., guest speaker event).
- Present research (when possible) at an internal or open meeting/event, including presentation prior to a thesis defence.
- Provide permission to display appropriate research and personal information on website.
- Agree to be listed on the Institute's distribution list and receive email notices.

Opportunities

- List membership in CV/resume and as part of signature line on correspondence during membership period.
- Participate in a research grants as appropriate.
- Participate in Senior Research Scholars' and Associate Research Scholars' research workshops, as appropriate.
- Join one of four HPI Research Clusters
- Access research expertise of Senior Research Scholars and Associate Research Scholars, as appropriate.



HPI Competency Framework Research Project

Need for a Framework

- Identify fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for population health research trainees
- Evidence to guide additional training opportunities and target professional development programming for HPI student research scholars
- No single existing framework met the needs of the interdisciplinary student members

Research Questions

- 1) What skills, research, and knowledge-based competencies do HPI Student Research Scholars want?
- 2) Does HPI Student Research Scholar membership offer opportunities for the development of these competencies?
- 3) What competencies already exist in population health field that are relevant for HPI trainees?
- 4) What additional resources are available around Dalhousie University for student that promote these competencies?

Multi-Method Approach

Qualitative data were collected and analyzed in three phases:

- Phase 1: Environmental Scan
 - Framework Collection
 - Resource Mapping
- Phase 2: Consultations
 - Trainee (student research scholars)
 - Expert (senior & associate research scholars)
- Phase 3: Framework Development

Phase 1: Environmental Scan

Framework Collection

- Existing health promotion and population health-related competency, skill, and accreditation frameworks were systematically collected through a search of peer-reviewed and grey literature

Search terms included:

- best practic*, competenc*, skill*, capacity*, outcome*, proficienc*, aptitude*, evaluat*, health, promot*, public, community, population*, develop*, population health, and health promotion

Phase 1: Environmental Scan

Resource Mapping

Website and resource scanning:

- Dalhousie departments, faculties, and libraries
- Informal communication with organization volunteers and employees at local health and research-based groups
- Organizations including Maritime SPOR Support Unit, Dalhousie Centre for Learning and Teaching, Nova Scotia Health Authority, etc.

Phase 2: Consultations

Trainee consultations

- The trainee consultation focus group followed a *needs assessment* approach to identify opportunities for HPI program development and impact optimization

Expert consultations

- This focus group identified ways HPI can develop the student research scholar training program and competency framework, based on the findings from the environmental scan
- They identified gaps in the draft framework and resource map and further identified opportunities to meet the needs of the trainees

Phase 3: Framework Development

- Analysis of the environmental scan, and the trainee and expert consultations yielded a draft framework comprised of 4 guiding principles and 6 competencies
- As a final step in drafting the framework, original grant members also reviewed and provided feedback

Results

Guiding Principles:

1. Capacity Building
2. Cultural Competence
3. Critical Reflection
4. Community empowerment, building, and Development

Four Guiding Principles:

- These principles should be incorporated throughout all aspects of the six competencies and daily practice of student research scholars

WHO, 2017; PHAC 2008; Allegrante et al., 2009; Ladhani, Sherpier, & Stevens, 2012; Health Promotion Canada, 2015; Tretheway et al., 2015; Czabanowska et al., 2014

Results



Six Core Competencies

- HPI student research scholars need **knowledge** (1) and skills on **research, policy, and practice** (2), as well as **programming and evaluation** (3), before we can effectively **communicate** knowledge and evidence (4). These knowledge and communication skills can be applied via **leadership** (5) that results in **supporting and enabling change** (6).

Results

Competency Resources:

- 52 health and/or research-based groups and organizations were identified through resource mapping
- The list serves as an informative database for HPI program planning and opportunities to enhance trainee success
- This demonstrates the relevancy of these competencies in relation to local experiential learning opportunities

Discussion

This collaborative research and development process:

- Provided student research scholars with group research experience that resulted in the creation of a novel competency framework
- May be adapted by other students in population health programs as a guide to create their own frameworks to meet their education and training needs

Future Research

- Sharing our findings and learning from others
 - Positive feedback from other health trainees in Atlantic Canada
- Putting the framework into action!
 - Grant application
 - Workshop series and website in development

Future Research

- Establishing an evaluation plan with measurable indicators – *how will we know when we have acquired these skills/knowledge?*
- Collaborating with local/national/international organizations and institutes to ensure HPI student research scholars have opportunities to develop these competencies

Acknowledgements

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Research team and co-authors:

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