1.3. INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The school shall be an integral part of an accredited institution of higher education and shall have the same level of independence and status accorded to professional schools in that institution.

1.3.a A brief description of the institution in which the school is located, and the names of accrediting bodies (other than CEPH) to which the institution responds.

ETSU is a state-supported institution governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), the sixth largest higher education system in the country. Chartered in 1909 as East Tennessee State Normal School, the institution became East Tennessee State Teachers College in 1925 and, five years later, State Teachers College. Beginning in 1943, the institution was known as East Tennessee State College for 20 years. ETSU is a multi-faceted university offering baccalaureate, graduate and professional programs to about 15,000 students from over 40 states and over 60 countries. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredits the university to award degrees at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral levels. Accreditation by SACS has been reaffirmed since 1937, most recently in December 2013 (www.etsu.edu/sacs). In addition to CEPH, the environmental health programs are EHAC (National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation) accredited since 1969. Most programs and/or departments and colleges across the university are individually accredited by their relevant accreditation bodies (see ETSU factbook page 19) http://www.etsu.edu/opa/factbooks/Fact%20Book%202012%20PDF%20-%20Book%202012%20PDF%20-%20Book%20Format.pdf

1.3.b One or more organizational charts of the university indicating the school’s relationship to the other components of the institution, including reporting lines.

Under the oversight of the TBR chancellor and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), ETSU is run by the president and his senior staff (figure 1 below). The academic programs at ETSU are divided into two main divisions: the Division of Academic Affairs, under the direction of the provost and vice president for academic affairs (figure 2 below) and the Academic Health Sciences Center (AHSC), under the direction of the vice president for health affairs and the chief operating officer (figure 3 below). The College of Public Health is a part of the AHSC. The five colleges in the AHSC are: College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences, James H. Quillen College of Medicine, Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy, College of Nursing, and College of Public Health.

1.3.c Description of the school’s level of autonomy and authority regarding: budgetary authority and decisions relating to resource allocation; lines of accountability including access to higher-level university officials; personnel recruitment, selection and advancement, including faculty and staff; academic standards and policies, including establishment and oversight of curricula

The College of Public Health holds equal autonomy with other colleges in the university. Each college has similar autonomy being directed by a dean and senior staff who answer directly to the relevant vice president. Within the policies and procedures of the university and the TBR, each college has full authority to select students for admission; recruit, hire, promote, and tenure faculty; develop, promulgate, and implement academic standards and policies; collect and assess student success data from alumni, employers, preceptors and other stakeholders; and recognize and reward excellence by students, faculty, and staff.
Budgetary Authority and Decisions Relating to Resource Allocation
Each college is responsible for its budgetary decisions within the general guidelines established by the TBR and specific practices articulated by the university. In the College of Public Health, the dean, in consultation with the Leadership Council, has primary responsibility for the college budget. The Leadership Council discusses budget issues, and the dean approves resource allocation based on those discussions and the college priorities as identified in the strategic plan. The assistant dean for finance and administration within the college is responsible for managing the college budget and reports directly to the dean. The assistant dean also has a “dotted line” relationship to the executive associate vice president for finance and administration. Departmental expenditures are under the direction of the chair. The principal investigator on grants is responsible for overseeing grant expenditures.

Lines of Accountability
The dean of each of the five Academic Health Sciences Center (AHSC) colleges, including the dean of the College of Public Health, reports directly to the vice president for health affairs. The AHSC deans meet, as a group, three times a month with the vice president for health affairs. In addition, the COPH dean is scheduled to meet one-on-one every month with the vice president for health affairs. In addition to the pre-scheduled meeting, the vice president is highly accessible at all other times and frequently holds additional ad hoc meetings with the COPH dean, as needed, to discuss developments and urgent matters. At the university level, the COPH dean participates in the Academic Council and the Dean’s Council, both senior decision-making bodies within the university.

Personnel Recruitment, Selection and Advancement
The College of Public Health is responsible for all personnel recruitment, selection, and advancement decisions, within the general human resources guidelines of the university and the TBR. For staff positions, the hiring unit within the college advertises the vacant position, reviews and screens applications, selects candidates for interview, and, following approval from the university’s Office of Equity and Diversity, interviews selected candidates, identifies a candidate for hire, and submits the Request to Hire to the college and other university authorities for approval. Once hired, the immediate supervisor of the staff member is responsible for orientation and training (beyond the university’s orientation), for recommending appropriate professional development activities, and for conducting performance evaluations, with review by the Office of the Dean.

Similarly, the college recruits and selects its own faculty, as described in Criterion 1.5.b. The college is responsible for faculty development, including instructional and research development, as detailed in Criterion 4.2.b. The college procedures for faculty advancement include annual planning and performance evaluation, mid-term review for tenure-track faculty, and support for promotion and tenure. The department chair and the dean review and approve each faculty member’s annual activity plan. The department chair and the dean also review and provide feedback about each faculty member’s annual evaluation report. The departmental and college promotion and tenure committees support faculty advancement. The formal procedures for evaluating faculty competence and performance are detailed in Criterion 4.2.c.

Academic Standards and Policies
Primary responsibility for academic programs is at the departmental level. This includes admissions criteria and admissions decisions, curriculum development and evaluation, student advising, and graduation requirements. For degree programs that span multiple departments (e.g., MPH, DrPH), college-wide operations committees (e.g. MPH Operations Committee, DrPH Operations Committee)
provide oversight of academic policies and procedures. New programs, and substantial revisions to existing programs, require a formal process that extends from each department to the college Curriculum Committee, and following approval, to the appropriate university committees including Academic Council, before submission to the TBR. A full description of the college’s governance related to academic standards and procedures is provided in Criterion 1.5.b.

1.3.d Identification of any of the above processes that are different for the school of public health than for other professional schools, with an explanation.

There are minor, but justified, differences among some of the colleges in the AHSC. For example:

1) The School of Graduate Studies oversees all graduate degrees in the health science colleges, including in the College of Public Health, except for professional degrees in the Quillen College of Medicine (COM) and the Gatton College of Pharmacy (COP). This means that the School of Graduate Studies formally admits graduate students to ETSU and awards diplomas. All decisions about admission, academic advancement, and curricular issues, however, are made by the individual colleges.

2) The COP is run as a “private school” and raises its operating expenses from tuition, research dollars, philanthropy, and other non-state sources. All other AHSC colleges receive some state funds.

3) The COM receives a separate budget line from the state, and its budget is, therefore, handled differently from the budgets of all of the other colleges (both on the AHSC and the academic side).

1.3.e If a collaborative school, descriptions of participating institutions and relationships.

This criterion is not relevant.

1.3.f If a collaborative school, a copy of the written agreement among participating universities.

This criterion is not relevant.

1.3.g Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met and an analysis of the school’s strengths, weaknesses and plans relating to this criterion.

This criterion is met.

Strengths:
ETSU is fully accredited by SACS and is overseen by the Tennessee Board of Regents and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. The College of Public Health is a fully autonomous college with equal rights and responsibilities with all other colleges at ETSU.

Weaknesses:
None noted.

Plans:
None noted.
1.3.b Figure 1 ETSU Organizational Structure
1.3.b Figure 2 ETSU Academic Affairs Organizational Structure
The Health Affairs blue box represents the Academic Health Sciences Center. Listed under the Health Affairs are the five AHSC colleges, including the Quillen College of Medicine, the College of Nursing, the College of Public Health, the College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences, and the College of Pharmacy.