



# DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM: USING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE GRADUATE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

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## BACKGROUND

The Institute for Disaster Management (IDM) at the University of Georgia offers one of the nation's six Master of Public Health (MPH) programs with a concentration in Disaster Management. IDM's two-year MPH program core curriculum includes four required courses in addition to elective courses and a 300-hour internship.

## OBJECTIVE

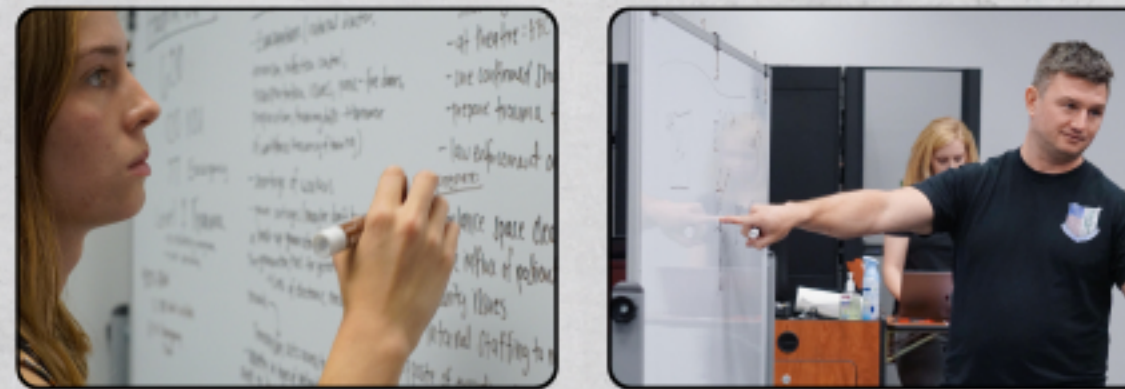
Explore how experiential learning opportunities can be incorporated into graduate-level, core curriculum disaster management courses to better prepare students for post-graduate employment.

## RESULTS

Students in the disaster management Master of Public Health program graduated with the following:



### Semester-long case studies



### Discussion & operations exercises



## 12 CERTIFICATIONS OBTAINED

- CIVILIAN RESPONSE TO ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENTS (CRASE)
- HOMELAND SECURITY EXERCISE AND EVALUATION PROGRAM (HSEEP)
- STOP THE BLEED
- BASIC DISASTER LIFE SUPPORT (BDLS)
- FEMA INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES
- 100.C, 200.C, 700.B., 800.D, 120.C, 201, 230.E, 235.C

## NON-CERTIFICATION TRAINING

- FIRST RECEIVER DECONTAMINATION
- MASS CASUALTY MANAGEMENT

## PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

- HAZARD VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS
- CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANNING
- MITIGATION PROPOSALS
- EXERCISE DOCUMENTATION
- TEACHING EXPERIENCE
- PRACTITIONER GUEST SPEAKERS

## 7 EXERCISE OPPORTUNITIES

## METHODS

Hands-on experiential learning techniques were incorporated throughout core curriculum disaster management courses to enhance graduate student learning experiences.

- Semester-long case studies of rural communities where students collaborated to create emergency preparedness programs for their respective communities
- Discussion- and operations-based exercises to expose students to emergency preparedness exercises
- Hands-on certification training opportunities to allow students to matriculate with certifications that confer advantages in applying for jobs post-graduation



### Certification opportunities



## Hands-on practical experiences

## STUDENT REACTIONS

I was able to leave this course with more certifications, and I know that because of these certifications it will be easier to qualify for jobs in the future.

This course incorporated a project that applied class knowledge to real counties that have disaster management needs. It reinforced the importance of disaster management and made it easier to understand the components of it.

Various in-class activities, open discussions, and hands-on activities strengthened my learning capabilities... I am a visual/hands-on learner, the hands-on opportunities were most valuable.

## CONCLUSIONS

Graduate students provided an enhanced classroom learning experience using experiential learning techniques in core curriculum disaster management course offerings are graduating with certifications and experience that position them to be competitive candidates for employment post-graduation.