



# Master of Public Health Field Practicum Manual

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## Purpose of the MPH Field Practicum

The primary purpose of the field practicum component is to provide MPH students with an integrative public health learning experience, in which they will have the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired through their coursework to real world experiences. In order to ensure that students are getting a truly integrative experience, the field practice will be completed in a community environment which may include, but is not limited to, hospitals, managed care organizations, government agencies, community organizations, research institutions, advocacy and policy programs, and private institutions. Internship experiences will vary, but students have most, if not all, of the opportunities to:

- Increase competency for a professional career in public health.
- Apply classroom learning to benefit a precepting public health agency by learning and practicing public health in a safe and supportive environment.
- Work on a project or area of interest, with results supporting a potential professional paper.
- Develop a mentor relationship with a qualified preceptor who has expertise in public health. Leadership experience is preferred.
- Work with community members, leaders and government officials with the goal of establishing partnerships in order to address health disparities and other community health concerns.
- Develop the competencies and mastery of the skills used by professionals in the community, public agencies and other workplaces.
- Gain the potential for job references from public health professionals who can testify to one's competencies in a professional context.
- Identify the skills, knowledge, and competencies that may be needed and may be acquired through additional academic study, training, or other experience.

## MPH Foundational Competencies (2021 CEPH)

Students are required to achieve **at least three** of the MPH Foundational Competencies from the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) during their field practicum (also called internship). The identified competencies will need to be included in the approved proposal and in the presentation at the end of the internship. Below is a list of the 22 CEPH Foundational Competencies.

1. Apply epidemiological methods to settings and situations in public health practice.
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context.

3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate.
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice.
5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings.
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels.
7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health.
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation or critique of public health policies or programs.
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention.
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management.
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs.
12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence.
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes.
14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations.
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity.
16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue.
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges.
18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.
19. Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content.
21. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health.
22. Apply systems thinking tools to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative.

## MPH Concentration Competencies

In addition to the Foundational Competencies, students must also achieve competencies within their own concentration. Below is a list of the concentration-specific competencies. Students must select **at least two competencies** they will achieve during their internship.

### *Community Health and Health Behavior (CHHB)*

1. Design a logic model to guide intervention development and data collection for program evaluation.
2. Develop an evaluation plan for health promotion and disease prevention interventions that addresses multiple levels of the socioecological framework.
3. Apply qualitative and quantitative data analyses to assess programming needs, evaluation, or public health issues.
4. Formulate a collaborative evaluation plan with a community partner to achieve common public health goals.
5. Design a public health project that includes a detailed itemized budget, timeline, and staff training plan for data collection.

### *Health Policy, Administration and Leadership (HPAL)*

1. Address inequities in the prevalence of chronic diseases in rural and minority populations using system thinking approaches.
2. Examine and interpret the impact of health cost, access, and quality policies on disadvantaged populations.
3. Cultivate leadership skills in strategic planning/management with a focus on reducing disparities in disadvantaged populations.
4. Perform financial analyses.
5. Develop and apply human resources management skills inclusive of diversity and disadvantaged populations.

### *Epidemiology*

1. Critically evaluate epidemiologic literature by applying methods of epidemiology to interpret research results and findings.
2. Identify and implement appropriate study design, recruitment, data collection and analysis methods to address an identified public health problem.
3. Identify and apply statistical methods to calculate appropriate epidemiologic measures of association, including identification of confounders and effect modifiers and their use in multivariable analyses.
4. Perform data management, analysis, visualization, and report generation of existing public health data using SAS to inform public health decisions.
5. Explain epidemiologic results in terms of magnitude, precision, validity, and limitations and identify their relevance to public health guidance.

# Field Site Requirements

## Preceptor Role and Expectations

### Preceptor Qualifications and Requirements

Preceptors should have sufficient experience in public health to mentor students. Typically, a preceptor will have three (3) years or more experience and hold a leadership position in the organization.

The majority of preceptors hold a graduate degree in public health or a related discipline. Occasionally, a preceptor may be considered for approval by the course instructor, if the preceptor has substantial experience in public health in a leadership capacity with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree.

Precepting agencies should fulfill the following requirements:

- Agency has a public health focus and has interest in collaborating with public health faculty;
- Qualified Preceptor;
- Facilitate interaction and collaboration with other members of the organization;
- Ability and time to devote to mentoring and supervising the student to ensure the student's successful performance in the field placement;
- Internship must allow for at least the minimum number of required hours (240);
- Review and comment on the APE proposal and competency rubric;
- There must be a current UAA between the agency and ECU.

### Evaluating Student Performance—The Preceptor's Role

The preceptor and the course instructor for the field practicum courses play a collaborative role in evaluating the performance of a student. Besides supervising the day-to-day work of a student during his/her field placement, the preceptor also helps evaluate the mastery of course competencies and objectives as outlined in the proposal. The following is a guide to the evaluation process.

- (1) The preceptor acknowledgement form, which is signed by the preceptor before the internship begins, delineates the student's work schedule, including starting and ending dates, the number of hours per week, as well as vacation and days off.

- (2) Internship Proposal: the internship proposal is a succinct proposal that begins with a brief overview of the organization including type, history, mission and vision. Students should specifically describe the type and nature of the work they will be performing and the tangible work products, referred to as deliverables, they will produce in the internship. A rubric for the proposal is provided on Canvas.
- (3) Specific guidance from CEPH accreditation pages 23-24 of the 2021 revised criteria on the APE are:

“The school or program assesses each student’s competency attainment in practical and applied settings through a portfolio approach, which reviews practical, applied work products that were produced for the site’s use and benefit. Review of the student’s performance in the APE must be based on at least two practical, non-academic work products AND on validating that the work products demonstrate the student’s attainment of the designated competencies. Examples of suitable work products include project plans, grant proposals, training manuals or lesson plans, surveys, memos, videos, podcasts, presentations, spreadsheets, websites, photos (with accompanying explanatory text), or other digital artifacts of learning. Reflection papers, contact hour logs, scholarly papers prepared to allow faculty to assess the experience, poster presentations, and other documents required for academic purposes may not be counted toward the minimum of two work products.” (CEPH 2021 revised criteria, pages 23-24)

A useful tool for students to develop their proposal is the use of blooms taxonomy verbs.

[https://www.apu.edu/live\\_data/files/333/blooms\\_taxonomy\\_action\\_verbs.pdf](https://www.apu.edu/live_data/files/333/blooms_taxonomy_action_verbs.pdf)

Both the course instructor and preceptor must approve the proposal before the student can enroll in the applied field practicum course, MPH 6905.

- (1) The midterm evaluation is the first major opportunity for the preceptor to evaluate the student’s performance. The midterm evaluation will take place between the preceptor, student and instructor. A Qualtrics survey link will be provided by the instructor to allow the preceptor to complete the evaluation online. The course instructor also provides the preceptor with the APE Competency Rubric to be completed and discussed with the midterm evaluation. The preceptor returns a PDF version of the midterm evaluation together with the APE Competency Rubric to the instructor at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled evaluation meeting. At the time of the midterm evaluation, the student should also submit a time log detailing the hours and nature of the internship work to date. The time log should be signed and approved by the Preceptor and submitted to the course instructor.
- (2) The Final Presentation: directly before the final evaluation, the student gives a final presentation with voice over to provide an overview of his/her internship experience and work. The final presentation typically lasts 20 minutes. The student is encouraged to invite agency staff that have worked with them to attend also.

The Final Evaluation takes place soon after the final presentation. The course instructor provides the preceptor with the Qualtrics survey link to complete the final evaluation as well as the APE Competency Rubric. The final evaluation, which typically lasts 30-40 minutes, is a comprehensive assessment of the student’s performance during the

internship. Preceptors are encouraged to provide concrete feedback on every aspect of the internship during the final evaluation, including the student's day-to-day work, as well as all contents of the student portfolio containing the APE proposal, midterm and final evaluations, the final presentation, minimum of two non-academic deliverables, time logs and APE competency rubric.

The Preceptor completes the final evaluation survey and returns the survey to the course instructor prior to the final meeting with instructor and student. For the final evaluation, the preceptor returns a PDF version of the survey to the instructor. At this time the student should provide the remaining time log, approved and signed by the Preceptor.

## **Selecting an Agency and Student Expectations**

It is in a student's best interest to choose a precepting agency that will offer the most enriching experience. Besides allowing a student to put into practice acquired skills, good internships often lead to postgraduate professional opportunities. Therefore, careful attention and sufficient time should be invested in selecting the right site. When choosing a field site in consultation with the course instructor and potential preceptors, the student must ask themselves a number of questions before selecting a site:

1. Will the agency offer a stipend?
2. Does the vision of the agency align with your career goals and interests?
3. Will you be able to find transportation to the agency site?
4. Will you need to find a different housing arrangement in order to work with the agency?
5. Is there the potential for a professional paper?
6. Could this internship lead to a job? Is there the potential for networking opportunities?

### Student Expectations

1. Initiate contact with MPH 6904 course instructor for discussion and advisement of potential Field Placement Internship opportunities.
2. Develop with MPH 6904 course instructor and preceptor specific goals and objectives of the proposed internship, demonstrating how competencies will be achieved.
3. Review with MPH 6904 course instructor and preceptor all necessary information and forms including agreement form, student/preceptor responsibilities, expectations, monitoring and evaluation forms.
4. Demonstrate professional behaviors that include appropriate attire, attendance and patient/organization confidentiality including HIPPA privacy and security guidelines.
5. Adhere to and follow all organizational policies and procedures.
6. Fulfill and complete all organizational projects and assignments. Maintain a bi-weekly log of activities via Canvas.
7. Complete the Final Presentation to the agency presentation with voice over.
8. Complete and present two non-academic products to the agency.
9. Create and complete your online portfolio, which will include your proposal, midterm and final evaluations, APE competency rubric, final presentation, time logs and minimum of two non-academic work products demonstrating competency achievement. You will create the portfolio in Portfolium.

10. Fulfill and complete all academic requirements for the field placement in a timely and professional manner.
11. Demonstrate responsibility for your own education and career development (ask questions, seek out information and advice, observe and listen).

### Important Note on UAAs

All field sites must have a University Affiliate Agreement (UAA) with ECU. UAAs protect students with liability insurance. The Department of Public Health already has many UAAs in place with common precepting agencies. However, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor with agency name. The instructor will work with the department administrative assistant who will check to see if a UAA is currently in place, needs renewal or a new one established. Students should proactively communicate with their instructor as soon as the agency has been identified to assure UAA is in place prior to starting their applied practicum experience.

### **Agency Required Proof of Immunizations, Drug Screens, Criminal Background/Sex Offender Background Checks & Orientation Requirements**

Some agencies will require interns to complete drug screens, proof of immunizations, criminal background checks and agency orientation trainings. It is the agency's right to require this information and different agencies have different methods for how such reporting is to occur. There can be an expense associated with complying with the agency requirements and it is the student is responsible for such expenses. Note that unsatisfactory criminal/sex offender reports may result in an agency rescinding their offer of an internship for you. ECU Health, formerly Vidant Health Systems utilizes a system called "Rotation Manager" for housing this information.

\*Note that such information will not be maintained in any course files. Such information is HIPAA protected privacy information.

### **Departmental Presentation Guidelines and Expectations**

MPH students are expected to be able to deliver substantive, professional presentations. Your final presentation is an opportunity to perfect your public speaking skills before presenting your professional paper.