**Purpose of the MPH Field Practicum**

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

1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of 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 Public Health & Health Care Systems.
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 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 Policy in Public Health.
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 principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making.
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 public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content.
21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams.
22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue.
MPH Concentration Competencies

In addition to the Foundational Competencies, students must also achieve concentrations within their own. Below is a list of the concentration-specific competencies. Students must select 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 address 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 approach.
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 leadership positions in their organization.

The majority of preceptors hold a graduate degree in public health or related discipline. Occasionally, a preceptor may be considered for approval by the Director of Field Placement having 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 student and supervision of student to ensure student successful performance in the field placement;
- Internship must allow for at least the minimum number of required hours (240);
- Review and comment on the major professional paper, both how it is written and presented, if applicable;
- There must be a current UAA between the agency and ECU.

Information about the roles and responsibilities of the Preceptor is available on the ECU Department of Public Health website at: [http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/publichealth/upload/ECU-MPH-Guide-for-Preceptors-052119.pdf](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/publichealth/upload/ECU-MPH-Guide-for-Preceptors-052119.pdf)

Evaluating Student Performance—The Preceptor’s Role

The Preceptor and the Field Placement Director 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 acknowledgement form, which is signed by the preceptor before the internship begins, delineates the intern’s work schedule, including starting and ending dates, the number of hours per week, as well as vacation and days off. This document is a contract whose realization can play a role in the evaluation of the student’s performance.
(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 deliverables they will produce in the internship. Examples of graduate public health skills and tasks are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Statistical Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Program Planning &amp; Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Writing/Fundraising</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Administrative/Clerical, Literature Reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Speaking</td>
<td>Facilitate Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Implementation</td>
<td>Develop Educational Materials</td>
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*Performing literature reviews and clerical work may be among the duties of any professional public health practitioner. However, clerical work and literature reviews should be a relatively small part of your duties.*

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)

Examples will be discussed in class. Both the course instructor and preceptor must approve your proposal before enrolling in the applied internship, MPH 6905.

(3) In accordance with the accrediting agency for the ECU Department of Public Health, students are required to develop and present at least two tangible products to the preceptor and the agency during the course of their internship. These products should be identified in the internship proposal. Examples of products include: educational materials (print/electronic); data entry spreadsheets; written reports; data outputs; etc.

(4) The midterm evaluation is the first major opportunity for the preceptor to evaluate the student’s performance. A Qualtrics link will be provided to allow the preceptor to complete the evaluation online. The midterm evaluation will take place between the preceptor and student. At the time of the midterm evaluation, the student should also submit a time log detailing the hours and nature of the internship work date. The time log should be signed and approved by the Preceptor and submitted to the Field Placement Director and Field Placement Coordinator.

(5) The Final Presentation: directly before the final evaluation, the student gives a final presentation 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.

(6) The Final Evaluation takes place immediately after the final presentation between the student and Preceptor. The final evaluation, which typically lasts 40 minutes, is a comprehensive assessment of the student’s performance during
his/her 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 the final presentation and poster. The Preceptor completes the final evaluation form, in order to collaboratively grade the student’s performance. For the final evaluation, the student should provide the Qualtrics link with the final evaluation form, as well as the remaining time log, approved and signed by the Preceptor. The Field Placement Director and Field Placement Coordinator will review the Final Evaluation to ensure that competencies are met.

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 Field Placement Director 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 Director of Field Placement and Field Placement Coordinator for discussion and advisement of potential Field Placement Internship opportunities.
2. Develop with Field Placement Director and preceptor specific goals and objectives of the proposed internship, demonstrating how core competencies will be achieved.
3. Review with Field Placement Director, Field Placement Coordinator 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 Blackboard.
7. Complete the Final Presentation to the agency and the poster presentation to the Department.
8. Complete and present two products to the agency.
9. Create and complete your online portfolio, which will include your poster and one product developed with the agency. You will send the URL for your completed portfolio to the Field Placement Director and Field Placement Coordinator.
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 check with the precepting agency to ensure that a UAA is in place **before any field practicum can begin.** **If an agency does not have a UAA in place, it can take 1-2 months to secure a UAA depending on the agency.** It is the student’s responsibility to plan ahead to allow for sufficient time for a new UAA to be established.

**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.

*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 able to deliver substantive, professional presentations. Your final presentation is an opportunity to perfect your public speaking skills before presenting your professional paper. The presentation will be in the form of a poster at the end of the semester on the Health Sciences campus. An Outlook Calendar Invite will be sent out with the time, day and location of the event. You are welcome to invite your preceptor and any agency representative you would like to attend.