

Practicum Guide for Preceptors

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in serving as a preceptor for our practicum program at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health.

We greatly appreciate the effort and expertise each preceptor dedicates to this program! Serving as a preceptor, you not only contribute to the education and training of our students but also help shape the future of public health.

To assist you in your role as a preceptor, we have summarized our practicum requirements in this short guide.

Degree Requirements

The UTHealth School of Public Health requires that all students enrolled in our Master of Public Health (MPH) and Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree programs earn three academic credit hours in the practicum course.

To earn the required three academic credits, the student spends approximately **180 hours** and in a practicum experience and completes **two final products**.

Learning Contract

Prior to enrolling in the practicum course, the student submits a learning contract, in which they propose a practicum project for review and approval.

Practicum Contact Hours

- After discussing a schedule with you, the student indicates the number of hours per week and the number of weeks he/she plans to spend in the practicum experience.
- As described above, students must spend a total of 180 hours in practicum to receive three academic credits. Each academic credit is equivalent to approximately 60 contact hours.
- The 180 hours do not all have to be completed onsite.
- If necessary, the student may propose more than one practicum experience to attain the required 180 contact hours.

Final Products

- By the end of the practicum, the student should complete **two final products**.
- At least one of these two final products should be meaningful to your organization.
- Ideally, the student will be able to use some form of the final product to represent their work to future employers or academics.
- The student's faculty mentor will assess the two final products before assigning the student's grade.
- **Doctoral-level** students enrolling in the practicum must complete a **reflection** as one of their two final products. This reflection may take the form of a written product, a portfolio, or other appropriate format. It includes the student's reactions to the practicum experience and an assessment of their own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities, including cultural proficiencies.

Learning Contract Approval

- You will have the opportunity to review and approve the project proposed in the student's learning contract.
- Once the student completes and submits the learning contract, you will receive an e-mail containing the complete learning contract in the body of the message with an "approve" and "reject" button.
- The student's faculty mentor and our Office of Public Health Practice are responsible for ensuring that the practicum and final product(s) meet our accreditation and academic requirements. As the preceptor, however, you may request or recommend changes to any part of the learning contract.
- If you wish for the student to make changes, please "reject" the learning contract and explain the requested changes to the student.

Completing the Practicum

- Please provide any necessary training for the student to complete safely his/her activities while working at your site. In addition, please orient the student to any site-specific expectations.
- During the practicum experience, please supervise the student and provide feedback for the student to complete the project successfully.
- Should you have any concerns about the student's performance, please feel free to contact the student's faculty mentor or our office (practicum@uth.tmc.edu).

Evaluation

- Near the end of the semester, we will e-mail you a link to a short evaluation survey in which you will assess the student's performance in the practicum.
- By completing this evaluation, you will provide valuable feedback to the faculty mentor (who grades the student's practicum) and will help us improve our practicum program.

Questions

Thank you for reviewing this material. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact us at practicum@uth.tmc.edu.