Practicum Overview

Office of Public Health Practice

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Agenda

- Describe the purpose and goals of practicum
- Plan for your practicum
- Develop learning contract and awesome learning objectives
- Choose a final product
What is a Practicum?

**Practicum** is an applied practice experience that is planned, supervised, and graded.

A requirement of our MPH and DrPH degree programs, practicum provides students an opportunity to apply classroom education towards solving a real-world public health problem.
Practicum Purpose

- Practicum provides a setting for our students to demonstrate public health competencies.
- Public health practitioners have expressed strong interest in our practicum program.
- Practicum experiences help our graduates find jobs in public health.
- The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the accrediting body for schools of public health in the U.S., dictates that our MPH and DrPH students attain public health competencies through applied practice experiences.
Practicum Goals

Practicum is a unique opportunity for you to

• Apply your classroom learning and acquired skills in a workplace setting
• Explore public health careers
• Define and refine your professional interests and goals
• Establish valuable contacts in the public health community
• Make a meaningful contribution to public health
• Be evaluated by public health practitioners
• Produce a final product that will increase your job prospects
Our Practicum Program

• Requires ~ 180 contact hours in the practicum experience for 3 academic credit hours

• Requires at least one final product approved by your preceptor and faculty mentor
Agenda

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Practicum consists of three stages...

1. Plan Your Practicum
2. Develop Your Learning Contract
3. Complete Your Practicum
Planning well in advance is important for developing a successful practicum.

You should begin this planning at least one full semester prior to starting your practicum.

If planning a practicum outside the U.S., you should plan at least 7-12 months prior to starting your practicum.
**Suggested Timeline**

**Semester 1**
- Explore ideas

**Semester 2**
- Discuss ideas with faculty advisor
- Identify potential preceptors and faculty mentor
- Begin to plan a project

**Semester 3**
- International practicum: notify OPHP 6 months prior
- Submit international travel: 8 weeks prior
- Submit learning contract

**Semester 4**
- Complete practicum
- Evaluate experience
- Update CV or resume

OPHP = Office of Public Health Practice = Practicum office
Finding a Preceptor

• Review the list of opportunities available at “Find a Practicum”: [https://inside.uth.edu/sph/practica/](https://inside.uth.edu/sph/practica/).

• Ask your faculty advisor or another faculty member for recommendations and introductions.

• Attend lectures and take advantage of other networking opportunities.

• Talk with your student peers, many of whom work or volunteer in the field of public health.

• Contact an organization that interests you and develop a practicum on your own.
Designing your own project will help ensure that the experience aligns closely with your career goals.

To help you get started, identify a public health need, problem, or question that you would like to address.

This need, problem, or question should serve as the foundation for your project.
Ideas for a Project

• Conduct a disease surveillance.
• Design public health training materials or curriculum.
• Design or implement a quality improvement project.
• Contribute to a grant proposal for a nonprofit organization.
• Design or conduct a survey on a public health topic.
• Evaluate infection control measures.
More Ideas for a Project

- Complete a needs assessment.
- Develop or evaluate a program.
- Conduct a policy analysis.
- Investigate shortfalls in a public health policy and recommend improvements.
- Launch a public health advocacy campaign.
- Design public health training materials or curricula.
When planning your practicum, please keep in mind other considerations that may add to your planning timeline:

- Preceptor Agreements
- Curricular Practice Training Approval for International Students
- International Practicum
Preceptor Agreements

We ask preceptors to sign a one-page Letter of Affiliation for our practicum program.

Many preceptor organizations want us to sign their own agreements for practicum.

- Forward requests for a practicum agreement to practicum@uth.tmc.edu
- U.S. preceptors: reviewed by UTHealth Legal Affairs
- International preceptors: prepared by Office of Global Health Initiatives
Curricular Practice Training

• Follow the procedure outlined on the Practicum website at https://sph.uth.edu/practicum/ under the International Students tab.

• The Office of International Affairs (OIA) must approve your practicum as Curricular Practice Training (CPT).

• OIA approval usually takes about 10 business days.

• You must have OIA approval before starting your practicum.
International Practicum

Students traveling internationally for practicum must submit their travel for review and approval.

• Before booking your travel, review and follow the travel guidelines described on our international travel webpage at https://sph.uth.edu/practicum.

• You must allow adequate time to prepare, submit, and receive approval of these travel documents.

• We also need to request collaboration agreements with your preceptor through the Office of Global Health Initiatives.
✓ Describe the purpose and goals of practicum
✓ Plan for your practicum
• Develop learning contract and awesome learning objectives
• Choose a final product
The Learning Contract is an agreement between you, your preceptor, and your faculty mentor that identifies your practicum’s learning objectives and outlines your work.

Your faculty mentor, preceptor, and the Office of Public Health practice review and approve this document before you can register.
## Learning Contract Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Registration Opens*</th>
<th>Learning Contract Submission Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Summer Session 2018</td>
<td>April 9, 2018</td>
<td>May 11, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Summer Session 2018</td>
<td>June 8, 2018</td>
<td>June 26, 2018</td>
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<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>July 16, 2018</td>
<td>August 17, 2018</td>
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<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>November 18, 2018</td>
<td>January 4, 2019</td>
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*Registration dates are tentative.*
Before You Begin This Step...
You should have

• found a preceptor who is willing and able to host your practicum;

• selected a faculty mentor who is a UTHealth School of Public Health faculty member; and

• identified a public health need, problem, or question to address during your practicum.
Your practicum should provide you with an opportunity to *apply* what you learned in the classroom in a public health setting.

Your learning objectives should describe what *actions* you will to take to help tackle a need, problem, or question that you identified along with your preceptor and/or faculty mentor.

Your learning contract should have at least 3-5 learning objectives.
Learning Objectives

Each learning objective should

- Describe an action
- Be specific
- Be measurable
- Be realistic
Learning Objectives

To help write your learning objectives, complete this sentence:

At the end of this experience, I will be able to [DO WHAT]?
Good Learning Objectives

✓ Describe an action

Begin each learning objective with an action verb.

For help, consult Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Choose actions from the middle-to-highest levels of learning.
Bloom’s Taxonomy

Highest Levels of Learning
- Creating
- Evaluating
- Analyzing
- Applying
- Understanding
- Remembering

Source: http://www.odu.edu/content/dam/odu/col-dept/teaching-learning/docs/blooms-taxonomy-handout.pdf
## Bloom’s Taxonomy: Action Verbs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Remembering</th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Applying</th>
<th>Analyzing</th>
<th>Evaluating</th>
<th>Creating</th>
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<tr>
<td>List</td>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td>Respond</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Create</td>
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<td>Define</td>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Compute</td>
<td>Distinguish</td>
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<td>Recognize</td>
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<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Differentiate</td>
<td>Propose</td>
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<td>Compare</td>
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<td>Name</td>
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<td>Contrast</td>
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<td>State</td>
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<td>Predict</td>
<td>Integrate</td>
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*Higher Learning*
Weak Learning Objectives

Examples:

• Learn about public health in Texas
• Appreciate my preceptor’s mission
• Learn how to present study results

Is this specific?
Is this measurable?
Good Learning Objectives

• Investigate the relationship between wet weather runoff, weekend boater activity, and presence of waterfowl on the concentrations of enterococci.

• Develop the evaluation framework for measuring the effectiveness of a community mobilization project.

• Investigate potential commercial food service violations in Houston.

• Conduct a needs assessment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities in Texas.

• Assess workers’ competencies in infection control topics by administering and reviewing pre- and post-training session tests.
Writing Tips for Learning Objectives

What is the public health need, problem, or question you’re addressing?

Who is your target audience for projects that communicate, disseminate, or promote information?

Write a very rough draft of your objectives in Word. Then revise. Revise again. (It gets easier).
Writing Tips for Learning Objectives

Other Writing Tips

• Be succinct.

• Short, simple sentences are better than wordy, complicated ones.

• Write for a lay audience.

• Avoid jargon.

• Do not cut-and-paste whole sentences or objectives from a description that someone else has written.
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Acceptable Final Products

- A **tangible** representation of the work completed during your practicum
- High quality representation of graduate level work
- Useful to your preceptor

**Tangible**: something that is concrete; can be touched; observed, recorded

**Not tangible**: a concept, understanding, or idea

To be considered tangible, a policy, process, or improvement should be recorded in some way.
Ideas for a Final Product

- Abstract
- Assessment tool
- Asset map
- Educational material
- eLearning course
- Evaluation plan
- Grant proposal (or part of a proposal)
- Infographics
- Interview guide or report
- Lesson plans, curriculum, presentation
- Logic model
- Manuscript
- Mobile app
- New or redeveloped instrument or protocol
- Poster
- Preparedness plan
- Presentation
- Collection of recipes or meal plans
- Report
- Survey instruments
- Training/Procedure Manual
- Webinar
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Bonus Round
Registration Tip

When registering for the practicum course in myUTH, make sure to select the correct number of credit hours.

During the spring 2018 registration, we discovered that myUTH defaults to 1 credit hour. Some students accidentally registered for 1 instead of 3 hours.
Please review the practicum orientation on our website for more information on submitting your learning contract and registering for practicum.
Refer to our website for step-by-step instructions, FAQs, information for preceptors, practicum postings, and more.
Questions?

Please e-mail any questions about your practicum to Practicum@uth.tmc.edu.

This mailbox is checked regularly and is the quickest and most reliable way to receive a reply to your question.
Thank You!

Thank you for attending this workshop!

Good luck and have fun with your practicum. We truly hope it is a rewarding experience!


Acknowledgments

Photos in this presentation were pulled from e-Mag articles contributed by the students listed below. The Office of Public Health Practice thanks these students for sharing their practicum experiences and photos!

1. **Matthew Duncan.** “Addressing Indoor Quality in a Vulnerable High-Rise.”  
   *Practicum Experiences. Fall 2015-Environmental & Occupational Health.*

2. **Linda Garcia.** “Investigation into the Etiology of an Outbreak of Unexplained Kidney Disease in Nicaraguan Sugarcane Workers.”  
   *Student Practicum Experiences. Fall 2015-Regional Campuses.*

3. **Chinelo Nsobundu.** “Improving Food Allergy Awareness and Epinephrine Coverage in Schools.”  
   *Student Practicum Experiences. Summer 2015-Management, Policy and Community Health.*

   *Student Practicum Experiences. Fall 2015-Management, Policy and Community Health*