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 provided some guidance outlining our practicum requirements.

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 3 academic credit hours in the practicum course.

Students enrolled in our Master of Science (MS) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs also may complete a practicum for academic credit.

To earn the required 3 academic credits, the student spends approximately 180 hours in a practicum experience.
Learning Contract

Prior to enrolling in the practicum course, the student submits a learning contract. This learning contract outlines major milestones in the student’s practicum experience.

Learning Objectives

- Each student should develop a practicum learning contract that proposes learning objectives.
- Each student acknowledges the Council on Education for Public Health competencies for either the MPH or DrPH degree programs.

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 proposed experience.
- As described above, students must spend a total of 180 hours in practicum to receive 3 academic credits.
- 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.
- Each academic credit is equivalent to approximately 60 contact hours.

Final Product(s)

- With your input, the student proposes at least one final product.
- This final product should be a tangible representation of the work the student completed during the practicum.
- The final product should also be meaningful to your organization and reflect graduate-level work.
- 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 receive and retain a copy of the final product(s).
- You may request an additional final product, which is subject to the faculty mentor’s approval.
- Students enrolling in the practicum course for the spring 2019 or later semesters must complete at least 2 final products.
Learning Contract Approval

- You will have the opportunity to review and approve the 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.
- By approving the learning contract, you agree to the following:
  - You will supervise the student’s onsite activities at your organization.
  - You will oversee the student’s project and provide feedback, when needed.
  - The student may conduct the project described at your organization (specified in the “Community Preceptor Information” section of the learning contract).
  - The contract information and organization name in the “Community Preceptor Information” section of the learning contract is correct.
  - You accept the proposed final product(s) as the primary deliverable(s) of the student’s practicum.
  - You will complete an evaluation of the student’s performance near the end of the practicum.
- The student’s faculty mentor and our Office of Public Health Practice are responsible for ensuring that the project, learning objectives, 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.