Learning Objectives

• Define practicum

• Identify the basic steps for developing and completing a practicum project

• Recognize factors that influence your practicum timeline

• Find resources to help you plan your practicum
What is a Practicum?

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

Practicum provides students an opportunity to work closely with public health professionals and **apply** their classroom education to real-world public health problems.
Who Must Complete a Practicum?

- All **MPH** and **DrPH** students must complete a practicum.
- MS and PhD students may also complete a practicum for academic credit.
- No waivers.
Academic Credit

- Both degrees require 3 academic credits in practicum
- 3 academic credit hours = minimum 180 contact hours in the practicum experience
- More than 3 academic credit hours in practicum do not count toward your degree.
Why Should YOU Do a Practicum?

10. Explore public health careers
9. Define/refine professional interests & goals
8. Acquire skills in a workplace setting
7. Be evaluated by public health practitioners
6. Because our accreditor (CEPH) requires a practicum of all MPH & DrPH students
Why Should YOU Do a Practicum?

5. Demonstrate your attainment of public health competencies
4. Establish valuable contacts in the public health community
3. Produce a product that will increase your job prospects
2. Make a meaningful contribution to public health
1. Get a job!
Practicum Project Examples

• Conduct a disease surveillance
• Design public health training materials or curriculum
• Implement a quality improvement project
• Evaluate infection control measures
• Investigate shortfalls in a public health policy and recommend improvements
• Launch a public health advocacy campaign
Practicum Stages

Practicum consists of four phases...

- Plan Your Practicum
- Develop Your Learning Contract
- Complete your Practicum
- Evaluate Your Practicum
Planning Your Practicum

Prior to beginning your practicum, you will select

- a **faculty mentor** to guide your practicum
- an **organization** to host your practicum
- a **preceptor** at the host organization
How to Find a Practicum

- Attend lectures or other networking opportunities
- Review “Find a Practicum” on the practicum website
- Ask your faculty advisor or another faculty member
- Talk with your student peers
- Contact an organization that interests you
Practicum Timeline

• Plan *well* in advance.
• Plan at least one full semester prior to your practicum start date.
• For an international projects, plan about 6-9 months in advance.
Suggested Timeline

**PHASE 1**

**SEMESTER 1**
- Review practicum requirements
- Explore ideas and host sites for your practicum

**SEMESTER 2**
- Discuss ideas with your advisor or faculty mentor
- Contact potential host sites and preceptors
- Submit your learning contract
- Meet any onboarding requirements

**PHASE 2**

**SEMESTER 3**
- Register for practicum
- Conduct your practicum
- Complete final products
- Complete evaluation

**PHASE 3**

**SEMESTER 4**
- Thank your preceptor
- Update your CV or resume
Other Considerations

• **International students**: At least 2 weeks for Curricular Practice Training approval.

• **Host site prerequisites**: Some organizations require a criminal background check, orientation or training, or specific agreements for our university to review and approve.

• **International projects**: At least 6 months for approval of preceptor agreements and about 8 weeks for travel approval.

• **Human Subjects Research**: IRB approvals vary from a couple of weeks to months depending on types of data being used, your research activities, and whether the study already has IRB approval.

• **Animal Research**: Research on animal subjects or animal derived materials requires approval by the Animal Welfare Committee.
Key Elements

With the assistance of your faculty mentor and preceptor, you will

1. Propose your project in a learning contract
2. Select 5 public health competencies
3. Complete two final products
Completing Your Practicum

Your faculty mentor will assign a pass or fail grade based on

- Final products
- Attainment of five competencies
- Any additional work assigned by your faculty mentor
- Preceptor’s evaluation of your work
Please visit the Practicum website for resources to help you plan and complete your practicum: https://sph.uth.edu/practicum/.
Thank You!

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

This practicum mailbox is checked each business day and is the quickest way to receive a reply to your question.