

Master of Public Health Practicum Overview and Preceptor Information

CU Anschutz Medical Campus

ColoradoSPH.Practicum@cuanschutz.edu

MPH Practicum Overview

Practicum Requirements

- All MPH students are required to successfully complete a practicum experience (≥ 120 hours) in which the student demonstrates competencies and integrates public health knowledge.
- The MPH Practicum must take place in a governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial, or for-profit setting. A practicum conducted in a university-affiliated setting will only be approved if the primary focus is on community engagement, typically with external partners. University-affiliated settings will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the practicum director/coordinator.
- The MPH Practicum must be mutually beneficial to both the student and the host site.
- The MPH Practicum must allow the student to demonstrate attainment of five competencies, three of which must be CEPH foundational competencies that can be found here: https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/docs/librariesprovider151/default-document-library/competencies-for-all-mph-graduates.pdf?sfvrsn=7c3efbb9_0
- Competencies for the MPH Practicum should be selected in collaboration with your academic advisor and/or preceptor. CEPH foundational competencies and concentration specific competencies are available here: https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/docs/librariesprovider151/default-document-library/competencies-for-all-mph-graduates.pdf?sfvrsn=7c3efbb9_0
- Interprofessional education (IPE) is a requirement of the practicum course. IPE occurs when people from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes. This refers to engagement with professionals outside of public health (e.g. architects, nurses) rather than to engagement with individuals from other public health disciplines (e.g. biostatisticians, health promotion specialists).
- The MPH Practicum host site and Preceptor must be approved by the Academic Advisor and/or Practicum Coordinator.
- Students must be registered for the Practicum course before logging hours toward the minimum 120-hour requirement. If a student is not registered for Practicum credits and is injured while working at the host site, the student may not be covered by the university liability/worker's compensation insurance.

Goals of the Practicum Experience

- Apply classroom theory, knowledge, skills and techniques to a professional work setting
- Enhance and develop new skills needed to function as a professional in a public health setting
- Work on a defined public health problem/issue that is salient to the preceptor site
- Participate in a setting that allows the student to explore future career decisions
- Engage in professional self-assessment and personal reflection
- Build a personal network of professional leaders in public health
- Engage with the community
- Actively participate as a member of an interprofessional team to address a public health

issue

- Connect with local and state public health agencies and other community-based organizations

Practicum Process for Students

- 1) Complete prerequisite requirements for Practicum:
 - a. Successfully complete the Foundations in Public Health course (CU/UNC) or Public Health Practice course (CSU)
 - b. Successfully complete 18 credits, including three core MPH courses
- 2) Begin early and allow adequate time to find a host site. Students should begin searching for a host site at least one semester prior to the desired practicum for a domestic experience. Students should begin searching for a host site at least two semesters prior to the desired practicum for an international experience.
- 3) Complete the Practicum Proposal including the learning plan, placement agreement and online certifications (see practicum proposal for a complete checklist)
- 4) Gain approval from Academic Advisor, community Preceptor and Practicum Coordinator/Instructor
- 5) Submit completed, signed proposal to the Practicum Coordinator and receive an access code to register for the Practicum Course

Practicum Placement

Since each student has a unique set of interests and skills, the practicum experience will be an individualized experience. The student will be matched with a community agency/host site and a community Preceptor. The placement of students will be flexible, but the following guidelines will be used to assess appropriateness of practice placement:

- Requires students to apply graduate level competencies
- Engages students in addressing a specific public health issue in a field setting
- Advances students' competencies and knowledge in public health practice
- Exposes students to the ten Essential Services of Public Health
- Has specific, defined project goals with deliverables
- Has a realistic time frame that is appropriate for a student to manage based upon their unique skills and knowledge
- Has a Preceptor who has appropriate training to oversee the student and/or project, is willing to agree to Preceptor responsibilities outlined in the project learning plan, and is approved by the MPH Practicum coordinator
- Enhances the students' professional network, career potential and professional development

Establishing a Practicum Host Site and Preceptor

The responsibility of creating an exceptional Practicum experience ultimately lies on the student. However, the student is not alone in this pursuit. The student will work closely with their faculty

advisor and the Practicum Coordinator(s) to receive support and guidance to ensure an enriching experience.

To start the placement process a student should:

- Review Practicum requirements
- Review the Practicum Proposal document
- Create an account on **ColoradoSPHConnect.com** to review opportunities
- Meet with a Practicum Coordinator and/or attend a Practicum Information Session. The Practicum Coordinator(s) may be reached at ColoradoSPH.Practicum@ucdenver.edu.

Responsibilities of Preceptor and Host Sites

The goal of the Practicum is to help the student grow personally and professionally for a career in the field of public health. The experience is designed to provide students with an opportunity to develop professional skills in a public health setting, while contributing to the needs of an organization. The school recognizes that this goal requires the support and commitment from community partners that are practicing public health in various settings. The primary responsibilities of a host site and Preceptor are to:

- Work with students to develop a realistic graduate level Practicum experience within the time commitment and student schedule
- Provide the student with a background about the organization and project
- Be available to meet with the student, provide supervision, and constructive feedback
- Provide resources for students to complete project (i.e. office space, computer, access to data)
- Provide written feedback for the student and the school by completing evaluation forms midway through Practicum (after the student has completed ~ 60 hours) and at the end of the Practicum experience (final evaluation).
- Support students in professional development activities (i.e. include in staff meetings, introduce organizational leaders, invite to professional events, etc.)
- Provide an opportunity for the students to engage in interprofessional education (IPE). IPE occurs when people from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes. This refers to engagement with professionals outside of public health (e.g. architects, nurses) rather than to engagement with individuals from other public health disciplines (e.g. biostatisticians, health promotion specialists).

Preceptor and Host Site Benefits

The Practicum experience adds great value to the student's development. In addition, having a student professional onsite also provides benefits to the host organization. For example:

- Students complete or conduct projects the organization may not have capacity to do
- Students provide an inquisitive approach and may provide creative ideas and solutions
- Students build professional capacity and may be recruited to become part of organization's

workforce

- Organizations and Preceptors have an impact on the field of public health by participating in the education of future professionals

Practicum and Capstone at the Same Host Site

A student may choose to “link” their Practicum with their Capstone project. For example, during the Practicum the Preceptor and/or student may identify an extended project that requires more than the minimum 120 hours for completion and culminates into a product that meets the requirements for the Capstone project. This possibility should be explored between the Preceptor and the student at the beginning of the Practicum experience, although in some cases the possibility for a Capstone project may be identified during, rather than prior to, the Practicum experience.

Global Practicum Requirements

Students who desire to complete their Practicum abroad must:

- Complete EHOH 6633 or complete a waiver that describes their past public health work abroad. Waivers may be requested from ColoradoSPH.Practicum@cuanschutz.edu.
- Contact the Office of Global Education (OGE) and gain approval for travel before registering for the practicum course. Nicole Herrin is the Study Abroad Coordinator for CU Anschutz (NICOLE.HERRIN@UCDENVER.EDU).

Preceptor Documents for Evaluating Students

Colorado School of Public Health MPH Practicum Midpoint Review (Preceptor completes with student)

The midpoint review should occur after approximately 60 hours of the practicum experience has been completed. This is an opportunity to reflect on the student's work to date, garner feedback and review the learning plan to ensure the activities are on track. Please insert or attach typed responses to the discussion points below.

The purpose of this review is:

- 1) to provide the student with an awareness of his/her strengths and weaknesses as related to the pursuit of a career in public health.
- 2) to provide the student with evaluative feedback concerning performance of his/her responsibilities in this practicum.
- 3) to provide suggestions for improving performance and correcting deficiencies.
- 4) to assess progress toward practicum completion and alignment with the learning plan.

DIRECTIONS

1. Schedule a meeting with the Preceptor to review the learning plan and discuss the practicum experience to date including the topics listed below.
2. Provide the preceptor with a midpoint performance review table (see below). **The preceptor should complete the assessment prior to meeting and discuss it with student during the meeting.**
3. **The discussion should be documented.**
4. Revise the learning plan (if applicable) to address any concerns uncovered during the review meeting.
5. Complete the **midpoint progress check** on the learning plan.
6. Provide the preceptor and instructor(s) (via Canvas) with **this review, including documented discussion and performance review table, and an updated learning plan if applicable, within one week of holding the midpoint review meeting.**

DISCUSSION POINTS (To be documented and submitted)

- 1) Discuss the overall Practicum and how it has unfolded to date (provide a brief summary of discussion).
- 2) List accomplishments to date.
- 3) Discuss progress on the learning plan (provide a brief summary of discussion). Complete the midpoint progress check and sign off on the learning plan activity tables.

- 4) Discuss the interprofessional experience to date; what has been accomplished (if hours have been logged), will you be able to complete the proposed activity(ies) and/or product(s)?
- 5) Discuss any challenges or barriers that may have affected the work to date (provide a brief summary of discussion). Describe what is being done to alleviate these obstacles.
- 6) Describe exciting and unexpected opportunities that have unfolded thus far in the Practicum.
- 7) Discuss student performance to date and highlight strengths and weaknesses (provide a brief summary of discussion).
- 8) Based upon the time left on this Practicum, will you be able to complete the proposed practicum activities?
- 9) Are there any changes that need to be made to the learning plan? Explain and attach revised learning plan if necessary.
- 10) Describe any other issues or concerns that need to be addressed.

Would the Preceptor like to have a meeting with the MPH Practicum Instructor?

Yes _____ No _____

SIGNATURES

Preceptor: _____ Date: _____

Student: _____ Date: _____

**Colorado School of Public Health -
Preceptor Midpoint Evaluation of MPH Practicum Student**

This form was developed to evaluate MPH student performance at the mid-point of the Practicum experience.

Instructions:

- The preceptor must complete this evaluation form prior to meeting with the student.
- Preceptors are asked to review the evaluation results with the student before submitting the completed evaluation. **Both preceptor and student are asked to sign this evaluation.**

Preceptor:

Agency/Organization:

Student:

Start/End Date of Practicum:

Below, please evaluate the performance of the MPH student at the mid-point of the Practicum experience by placing an “X” in the appropriate box.

	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Partially Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	Not Applicable
Attendance/Punctuality					
Cooperation/Teamwork					
Problem Solving					
Dependability					
Professionalism					
Initiative					
Adaptability/Flexibility					
Ability to Accept Communication					
Cultural Competency					
Basic Public Health Skills					
Policy Development					
Program Planning					
Leadership					

Are there other skills on which you would like to comment?

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Preceptor Final Evaluation of MPH Practicum Student (Preceptor will complete this online near the end of the Practicum)

The final review should occur when the Practicum experience has been completed. This is an opportunity to reflect on the student's work and overall practicum experience.

A link to this evaluation will be sent to the Preceptor from ColoradoSPH.Careers@ucdenver.edu. This evaluation will be completed and submitted online.

The following information should be provided by the Preceptor upon the completion of the student's practicum experience:

	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Partially Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	Not Applicable
Attendance/Punctuality					
Cooperation/Teamwork					
Problem Solving					
Dependability					
Professionalism					
Initiative					
Adaptability/Flexibility					
Ability to Accept					
Communication					
Cultural Competency					
Basic Public Health Skills					
Policy Development					
Program Planning					
Leadership					

1. Are there other skills on which you would like to comment?
2. Please describe your satisfaction with the activities and/or products completed by the student, as outlined in the Practicum Learning Plan.
3. Please discuss the student's interprofessional experience; was it successful/beneficial to the student and/or host site?
4. What strengths will the student bring to the public health profession?
5. What recommendations for professional development do you have for the student?
6. Did you feel that the total number of hours designated for the student Practicum were sufficient in meeting your agency's needs?
7. Would you like to set up an appointment to talk with your student's Practicum Coordinator?
8. Please share any other feedback regarding your experience as a preceptor.