

## PRACTICUM POLICY

All MPH students are required to satisfactorily complete a 300-hour practical experience as part of the MPH program. The Practicum consists of 2-credit-hours of public health practice which students are expected to register for upon completion of all core and concentration courses. During that semester students are expected to register for no more than a total of 9 credits. Students are allowed to register for the Practicum in the same semester with only one core and/or concentration course along with the Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) II course (as long as the course not yet taken does not consist of material needed to effectively undertake the activities of the practicum). To be allowed to register a concentration course along with the practicum, the student needs to seek the approval of the concerned department. In exceptional circumstances, part-time students working full-time who wish to complete their practicum hours over two semesters may petition to do so. The petition must include an approval from the Practicum Coordinator, Academic Advisor, Chair of the department of concentration, Practicum site Preceptor and the approval of the organization where the student works. Such students will register for the practicum in the second semester. The petition must be submitted to the Practicum Coordinator for final approval at least three months before the start of the practicum placement period.

The first week of the practicum is devoted to the orientation to the practicum site. Students rotate among divisions within the site, get insight into the underpinnings of programs and facilities, understand the mission and objectives of programs and projects, and interact with relevant staff and community stakeholders to set the stage for the practicum and develop the practicum plan.

During the practicum period, each student works under the guidance of a site-based practicum preceptor<sup>1</sup> who agrees to closely supervise and evaluate the work of the student. The student also coordinates closely with his/ her departmental practicum advisor who assists in the definition of the practicum objectives and periodically reviews progress. The practicum advisor can also be the ILE advisor. Throughout the practicum period, the student also keeps the Practicum Coordinator informed of any issues relating to the practicum. The practicum advisor, preceptor and student (and Practicum Coordinator if necessary) meet in the first two weeks of the practicum preferably at the practicum site to discuss the practicum and options for activities/tasks to be assigned to the student. It is the responsibility of the practicum advisor to make sure that this meeting takes place.

The full-time practicum students spend a minimum of 30 hours per week at the practicum site. The part-time practicum students taking the practicum over 2 terms spend a minimum of 16 hours per week at the practicum site divided as 2 full days or 4 half days per week. Practicum students are required to keep a log of the time spent at the site.

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<sup>1</sup> Preceptors should be practitioners working in positions where public health policies and programs are formulated, developed, implemented, and evaluated. S/He should be a decision-maker in her/his organization and must have the support of the organization's top-level of management.

The focus, substance, and approach of the practicum will vary depending on the student's area of concentration. However, MPH students of all concentrations are expected to gain field experience during their practicum. In the beginning of the practicum, the students identify 3 MPH core and 2 concentration competencies which they aim to acquire by the end of their practicum. In order for the student to pass the practicum course, s/he needs to acquire the 5 competencies identified at the outset. The grade for the Practicum is pass or fail.

Students are not eligible for graduate assistantships while doing their practicum.

**Discussed and approved at the GSC on March 31, 2021.**