PHC 6945
Practicum in Public Health

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WHAT IS PRACTICUM?
Applied Practice Experience

• A temporary position with an emphasis on education and the application/practice of public health for a minimum of 200 hours that bridges the gap between theory and practice.

• Mutually beneficial, planned, and supervised field experience.

THE PRACTICUM IS A PROCESS
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

• An MPH is a practice-based degree

• Classroom training provides knowledge and skill sets

• Practicum is the application of the knowledge and skill sets

• Prepares you for practice post graduation (ensures you are practice ready)

• Adds to your resume
Exemptions

• Requires at least **three (3)** years of **full-time** public health experience
• Submission of documentation such as resume and job description will be required in order to determine approval for exemption
• Exempted students still are to submit a portfolio but answers questions related to the previous work experience
• Another class is substituted in place of practicum course
• Exemption paper and approval **must** happen at least **TWO (2)** semesters prior to the semester you are supposed to take the practicum course
• Exemption paper = Practicum portfolio = same expectations
Best Practices for Identifying a Site

- Start with your interests and future goals
  - What do I want to do when I graduate?
  - Where do I want to be?
  - What topics interest me?
  - Search online for agencies in your local area

- Don’t be shy in reaching out!
  - Agencies benefit from your area of expertise and training
  - Be confident in yourself

- Tailor messages sent to each organization

Good afternoon Mx/Dr. [Insert Name],

My name is [Insert Name] and I am a current Master of Public Health (MPH) student at Florida International University who is very interested in your organization. As part of my program’s requirements, I am expected to complete a 200-hour internship. Do you have any internships available or individuals who are willing to accept students? Attached you will find my resume but if you would like any additional information from me, please let me know. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[Insert Name]
Sites

- Organizations that contribute to public health
- Needs to provide:
  - Opportunities for you to develop further
  - Opportunities for you to apply competencies learned in the MPH program
  - An on-site supervisor (Preceptor) who can regularly meet with you to discuss their progress

Examples

- Federal agencies:
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
  - Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
  - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
  - Veterans Administration (VA)
- State, county, or city health departments
- Ministries / departments of health
- Health and social service agencies
- Managed care organizations
- Insurance companies
- Neighborhood health centers and community clinics
- Hospitals and clinics
- Global health organizations and clinics
- Community mental health centers
- Environmental health consulting companies
- Industrial settings
- Multi-specialty medical practices
Sites (Hospitals – Important to Note!)

- Tend to have additional requirements:
  - Orientation
  - Drug screening
  - Vaccinations/immunization records
- Complio – TAKES TIME & $$

Guidance:
- Start process **very early**
- Contact HR & Volunteer Services depts
Qualified Preceptors

• Provides direct supervision

• Evaluates performance on public health activities and duties

• Possess an MPH OR the equivalent combination of education and experience as determined appropriate by Instructor
Let’s Discuss:
Documents

✓ Internship offer letter/email OR affiliation agreement
  ✓ Form A
  ✓ Form B

**NOTE: ALL** must be on file before you can begin documenting your practicum hours
Academic Requirements

• At least 30 credits completed (accelerated students - exception)

• Written/email approval from Practicum Instructor

• Register for PHC 6945

• Documents on file (must be approved by Instructor):
  1. Form A – Education Plan
  2. Form B – Preceptor Agreement
  3. Internship offer letter/email OR active Affiliation Agreement
Affiliation Agreements

• Agreement between FIU and agency

• Defines roles, responsibilities, and accountability between entities in providing practice education

• Completed by Instructor and agency

• **Must** be active and on file before arriving on site

• **Must** be done early
  • Takes at least four (4 - 6) weeks to complete*

• **Recommendation:**
  • Identify your site **early** since this process takes a **minimum** of 4 – 6 weeks.
FORM A: Education Plan

• Blueprint for your practicum experience
• Outlines the following:
  1. **What competencies** you’re addressing through your work
  2. **How** you’re addressing each competency (activities); what will you do to achieve the competency (actions you will take)
  3. **One** work product per competency
Competencies

**Competencies** define what a successful learner should know and be able to do upon completion of a particular program or course of study.

- Describe in measurable terms the knowledge, skills and abilities a successful graduate will demonstrate at the conclusion of the program (CEPH Accreditation Criteria for Schools of Public Health)

- Twenty-two (22)

- Five (5) are required – ALL will need a work product, evidence, outcome

- Your skills and knowledge will be demonstrated through your **activities**
Great!

- Development of survey tools
- Analysis of data
- Creating materials for an agency that promote health in various communities
- Creating a communication plan for a local organization
- Working on a project that involves program evaluation
- Spearheading the planning and execution of a public health program, event, intervention, or project

Ummmm...

- Handing out and collecting surveys only
- Working solely with a faculty member to produce a manuscript
- Volunteering to build homes for Habitat for Humanity
- Packaging food at a food bank
- Taking a survey or giving feedback to improve organizational effectiveness
- Going door-to-door to solely give out pre-made informational brochures
- Solely performing administrative tasks
Activities & Demonstrated Competencies

- Lit review and local data on priority population demographics and cultural values of population. Review of program and apply the identified cultural values to program.

- Identify through literature risk factors on XXX among population XXX, develop goals and objectives, program description, budget, and evaluation plan.

- Competency #8: Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs.

- Competency #9: Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention.
Activities & Demonstrated Competencies

• Reviewing and presenting results with visuals from data analysis output from a survey assessing community needs within Honolulu, HI to guide the development of future initiatives

• Identify through literature population’s demographics and review data on population’s health to develop assessment that will determine needs, recognize assets and understand populations’ capacities.

• Competency #4: Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice

• Competency #7: Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities’ health
Work Products (Deliverables)

- Evidence to show how competency was accomplished

- Work products need to match your approved proposal plan

- **Each competency** will need a work **All** must be included in final portfolio

- Reflect your work/efforts (not agency)
Examples of Deliverables

- Curriculum
- Dashboard User Guide
- Data Extraction, Collection & Analysis Report
- Data analysis results or output
- De-identified data set
- Evaluation or evaluation plan
- Fact sheet for a target audience
- Health Resource booklet
- Health Communications Plan
- Key informant interview
- Summary report
- Webpage designed by you
- Literature review
- Monitoring & Evaluation Tool Development
- Policy Analysis
- PowerPoint Presentation Program
- Multi-media presentation
- Project Management Plan Poster Presentation
- Quality Improvement Plan
- Training guide/manual
- Manuscript
- Research study proposal
- Risk Assessment Analysis
- Report/Spreadsheets
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Statistical Analysis Plan
- Survey or data collection tool
Final Portfolio Layout

I. Form A: Practicum Education Plan
II. Up-to-date resume
III. Introduction to the Agency (size, location, mission/vision …)
IV. Competencies – each listed and short description of activities AND Work/Evidence Samples for each (5 work products)
V. Form B: Preceptor Agreement
VI. Form D: Preceptor Evaluation
VII. Form E: Student’s Self-Evaluation
VIII. Biweekly journals
IX. Other materials (trainings, certificates, etc.)
X. References
Example of Competency Description

**Competency #7: Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities’ health**

Before devising a community-wide health fair, I needed to determine the specific needs of individuals living in my target area (Miami Gardens, Florida). My first two (2) weeks of my practicum project consisted of conducting interviews with 40 community stakeholders. The names of these stakeholders were shared with me through my Preceptor and the agency’s database. These stakeholders included residents, local government representatives, and leaders of community groups. **Figure 4** displays the questions posed to stakeholders during each 15-minute interview.

Apart from conducting one-on-one interviews with stakeholders, I also revisited and revamped the agency’s needs assessment survey. The last time a needs assessment was distributed amongst the community was in 2009, so it was more than appropriate to reassess the needs of the community now through another iteration of the survey. **Figure 5** displays the questionnaire that I revised and a summary of the results can be found in **Table 3**. I utilized Qualtrics to gather survey responses and to generate data exports. As shown, the community respondents and stakeholders displayed/expressed a need for no-cost secondary prevention interventions, specifically screenings for diabetes and hypertension.
Commonly Asked Questions

• Do I find a site myself?

• Does my place of residence impact my practicum experience?

• How do I reach out to sites?

• I work full-time; how can I still do my practicum hours?

• Can an internship count as my practicum project?

• Can my current place of employment and my supervisor be my site/preceptor?

• Can I start my practicum hours before my proposal plan is approved?
Deadlines

• To submit all documents
  - Fall Practicum – July 1\textsuperscript{st}
  - Spring Practicum – November 1\textsuperscript{st}
  - Summer Practicum – March 1\textsuperscript{st}

• To have all documents approved
  - Fall Practicum – August 1\textsuperscript{st}
  - Spring Practicum – December 1\textsuperscript{st}
  - Summer Practicum – April 1\textsuperscript{st}
Questions?

Thanks for joining us!

Recommended Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MPH credits completed</th>
<th>Action</th>
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| Up to 15 credits      | 1. Begin conversation about where you want to do practicum  
                        | 2. Attend info session |
| Up to 24 credits      | 1. Request practicum application  
                        | 2. Attend information session  
                        | 3a. Submit letter of internship offer  
                        | 3b. Request start of Affiliation Agreement |
| Up to 30 credits      | Submit all requirements:  
                        |   • Form A  
                        |   • Form B  
                        |   • Letter of internship offer/Affiliation Agreement |