

MASTER *of*  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**



# PRACTICUM



UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

/ SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



# GUIDELINES for THE MPH PRACTICUM

What makes a good practicum project? MPH practicum projects must be public health-related and provide a challenging environment for the student. The best practicum sits at the intersection of a student’s specialty interests, desired professional skill sets, and the MPH core competencies. Project focus areas can vary significantly depending on the fields represented by participating sites, but a good practicum offers the student an opportunity to apply skills that are more effectively acquired and cultivated outside of the classroom. It should also support the development of critical professional skills such as grant writing, data analysis, program evaluation, policy development, or piloting a research project.

A practicum project may be undertaken in a single block of time or spread over one or more quarters with the student completing a minimum of 120 hours of fieldwork for the practicum site. Throughout the practicum project, the student will be managed and mentored by the site supervisor and a practicum faculty adviser.

The MPH practicum is only one type of field-based experience available to public health students, and the table below outlines some of the key distinctions between the practicum and these other experiences:

	PRACTICUM for CREDIT	ACADEMIC INTERNSHIP for CREDIT	INTERNSHIP NOT for CREDIT	VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY NOT for CREDIT
Experience is open to graduate and undergraduate students	GRAD MPH ONLY	Either undergraduate or graduate	Either undergraduate or graduate	Either undergraduate or graduate
Intentional learning outcomes are developed and incorporated into project details	Yes	Yes	Optional	Optional
Student is supervised by a professional in the field with a background in public health	Yes	Yes – <i>although supervisor background could be in another relevant field</i>	Optional	Optional
Student project hours are prioritized toward applying skills learned in the degree program	Yes	Yes	Optional	Optional
Majority of project hours are spent working on site and/or engaging with public health professionals	Yes	Yes	Optional	Optional
Hours required	120 or more	30 or more	Determined by site/student*	Determined by site/student
Compensation	Allowed but not required	Allowed but not required	Allowed but not required*	No

\*WITH THE EXCEPTION OF INTERNSHIPS COMPLETED BY MASTERS OF HEALTH ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.MHA.UW.EDU](http://WWW.MHA.UW.EDU)



# PLANNING for THE MPH PRACTICUM

**For sites seeking MPH students,** practicum planning should begin 6 months prior to the arrival of the student.\* When the practicum project details have been solidified, a site supervisor should be selected. The site supervisor should have expertise in the specified project areas, status within the organization, and competence in supervising and mentoring. The site supervisor will submit a practicum project proposal to the SPH Office of Student Affairs. MPH students are typically looking for practicum opportunities in Winter & Spring Quarters for project placements beginning in the Summer & Autumn Quarters.

*\*If an MPH student has approached the site to negotiate a practicum, proceed to Step 2: The Learning Contract.*

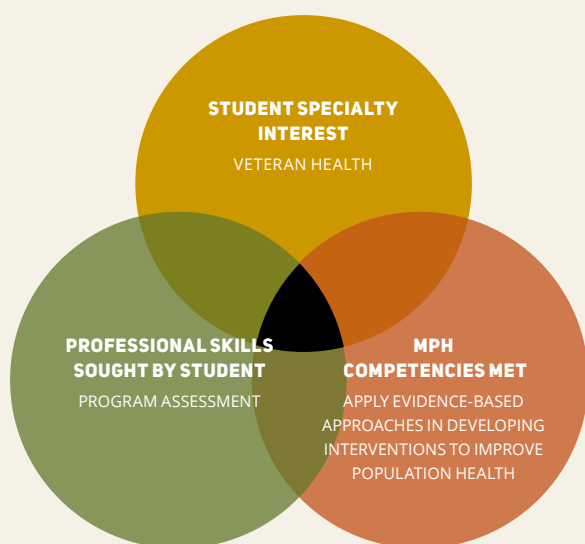
**For MPH students,** practicum planning should begin at least 3 months prior to the estimated project start date. This will allow ample time for identifying possible sites and projects, completing the prerequisites, developing a learning contract, and ensuring that an appropriate affiliation agreement is in place between the site and the School of Public Health.

**Practicum projects MUST address the following individual student and programmatic criteria:**

**STUDENT SPECIALTY INTERESTS**

**RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL SKILLS SOUGHT BY STUDENT**

**MPH COMPETENCIES**



## EXAMPLE PROJECT

Assess the feasibility and impact of a rehabilitative garden program targeting veterans.



## PRACTICUM RESOURCES

### FOR SITES, STUDENTS, AND FACULTY

Further information, instructions, and relevant forms related to the MPH practicum can be found on the SPH Experiential Learning website.

SPH Office of Student Affairs  
School of Public Health , Box 357230,  
University of Washington ,  
Seattle, WA 98195-7230

206-685-3057, [mphprac@uw.edu](mailto:mphprac@uw.edu)  
[www.sph.washington.edu/experiential](http://www.sph.washington.edu/experiential)



## RESPONSIBILITIES

### SITE SUPERVISOR

- ☐ Solidify practicum project details.
- ☐ Submit a project proposal to the SPH Office of Student Affairs.
- ☐ Select an MPH student.

### MPH STUDENT

- ☐ Enroll in and comply with the UW Health Sciences Immunization Program (HSIP).
- ☐ Attend an MPH practicum orientation.
- ☐ Complete the MPH practicum prerequisites and the associated prerequisite form.
- ☐ Identify an SPH practicum faculty adviser.
- ☐ Determine project interest areas and potential sites.
- ☐ Solidify a practicum opportunity either through personal discussions, departmental contacts, individual networks, or by searching the Current Opportunities web page.

### PRACTICUM FACULTY ADVISER

- ☐ Advise the MPH student in identifying professional goals and clarifying learning objectives that are individualized and relevant.
- ☐ Assure that the practicum field placement negotiated between the student and site is appropriate and meets departmental and program requirements.





# LEARNING CONTRACT

The learning contract outlines a proposal for the work to be undertaken during the field placement and is developed by the student, in conjunction with the site supervisor and the practicum faculty adviser. The learning contract ensures that the scope of responsibilities and duties are understood and agreed upon before the start of the field placement. The learning contract must receive final approval by the practicum faculty adviser and be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs before the student begins the field experience.



**“My practicum experience was a great match for my research interests and provided me with new contacts in the field.”**

## RECENT MPH PRACTICUM PROJECTS

### Jason Goldman

MPH IN EPIDEMIOLOGY

Conducted a series of quality improvement interviews aggregating data related to the treatment of sepsis in cancer patients.

### Melissa Cummings

MPH IN HEALTH SERVICES

Developed an exit survey to capture the demographic and healthcare history of patients visiting a no-cost health clinic with the goal of identifying barriers to health care access in King County.

KATHRYN BERGH

MPH IN HEALTH ANALYSIS AND POLICY

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### SITE SUPERVISOR

Ensure that the following details are included and clearly communicated in the learning contract:

- ☐ organizational expectations;
- ☐ project timeline; and
- ☐ percentage of time spent on-site and/or engaging with public health professionals.

### MPH STUDENT

Ensure that the following details are included and clearly communicated in the learning contract:

- ☐ address, phone number, and name of the director for the site;
- ☐ name, email, and phone number for the site supervisor and practicum faculty adviser; and
- ☐ quarter applying for credit (typically the quarter after site work will be completed).

### PRACTICUM FACULTY ADVISER

Prior to the final approval of the learning contract, carefully review the details to ensure:

- ☐ that the student will be spending the majority of time at the practicum site and/or engaging with public health professionals;
- ☐ that project status related to the Institutional Review Board has been determined; and
- ☐ that the student will participate in work that mirrors skills developed in the degree program.



# AFFILIATION AGREEMENTS

An affiliation agreement outlines the legal expectations for the conduct of all parties, the resources to be provided, and the liabilities to be assumed. A completed affiliation agreement must be on file with the Office of Student Affairs before a student can begin practicum project work. For sites not yet covered by an affiliation agreement, the Office of Student Affairs will work to establish one upon receipt of a finalized learning contract. Affiliation agreements can take up to 12 weeks or longer to finalize.

To view a list of sites already affiliated with the School of Public Health, please visit [www.sph.washington.edu/experiential](http://www.sph.washington.edu/experiential).

## RECENT MPH PRACTICUM PROJECTS

### Corey Snelson

MPH IN PUBLIC HEALTH GENETICS

Gathered ethnographic information from individuals experiencing homelessness in King County in order to understand the incidence of ordinance enforcement requiring relocation to unhealthy or dangerous areas.

### Saam Dilmaghani

MPH IN PUBLIC HEALTH GENETICS

Implemented an anti-violence education program in Seattle middle schools.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### SITE SUPERVISOR

- ☐ When negotiating an affiliation agreement, the supervisor may serve as the liaison between the site and the School. Affiliation agreements may also be negotiated directly with the site's legal or HR department.

### MPH STUDENT

- ☐ Once an approved learning contract has been submitted, students can contact the Office of Student Affairs to check on the status of any agreement between the site and the School.

### PRACTICUM FACULTY ADVISER

No action is required.



**"The practicum experience gave me the opportunity to work with a variety of researchers in a collaborative and multidisciplinary environment."**

**JONATHAN SKIRKO**  
MPH IN EPIDEMIOLOGY





# SITE WORK

During the period in which an MPH student conducts project work for the site, the site supervisor, in conjunction with the student, will be responsible for completing a mid-point review and a final evaluation. The mid-point review should occur approximately halfway through the project and serves as an opportunity for reflection and feedback. The final evaluation is completed at the end of the project and evaluates the student's overall progress while identifying the student's strengths and growth opportunities in practice.

**"The practicum experience had a positive impact on my personal and professional development."**

**HADAR SHEFFER**  
MPH IN PUBLIC HEALTH GENETICS

## RECENT MPH PRACTICUM PROJECT

### Allen Roberts

MPH IN GLOBAL HEALTH

Designed a modular electronic survey instrument used to capture costs and constraints of vaccination activities at facilities in Uganda.

## RECENT MPH PRACTICUM PROJECT

### Meenakshi Kushwaha

MPH IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES

Assessed healthcare worker knowledge pertaining to the accurate diagnosis of pneumonia caused by indoor air pollution in Malawi.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### SITE SUPERVISOR

- ☐ Complete a midpoint review and final evaluation, in conjunction with the MPH student.
- ☐ Ensure the following are made available to the student during their time on-site:
  - ☐ a set schedule for completing project hours;
  - ☐ a work space;
  - ☐ clear communication around project expectations and conduct;
  - ☐ consistent feedback that is specific and timely.

### MPH STUDENT

- ☐ Complete a midpoint review and final evaluation, in conjunction with the site supervisor.
- ☐ Complete 120 project hours (at minimum).
- ☐ Maintain good communication with site supervisor, practicum faculty adviser, and Manager of Experiential Learning.
- ☐ Demonstrate professional behavior at all times.

### PRACTICUM FACULTY ADVISER

- ☐ Monitor student progress throughout the duration of the practicum project.
- ☐ Provide support to the MPH student and the site supervisor as needed.





# FINAL ASSIGNMENTS



The final assignments, consisting of the written assignment and poster, allow the student to reflect on the practice experience and provide an opportunity to place the experience within the context of the site. The student is asked to think critically about the professional value of the placement and his or her greater contribution to the public health profession. The assignments may be developed in collaboration with faculty and site personnel, but their timely completion and submission are solely the responsibility of the student.

After the student’s practicum assignments have been approved by the practicum faculty adviser, they are submitted to the Office of Student Affairs. When all assignments and paperwork are complete, the Manager of Experiential Learning will provide a final checklist to the student. Once the final checklist has faculty and departmental adviser approval, it is submitted to the Office of Student Affairs. Then, the student practicum experience will be considered complete.



## RESPONSIBILITIES

### SITE SUPERVISOR

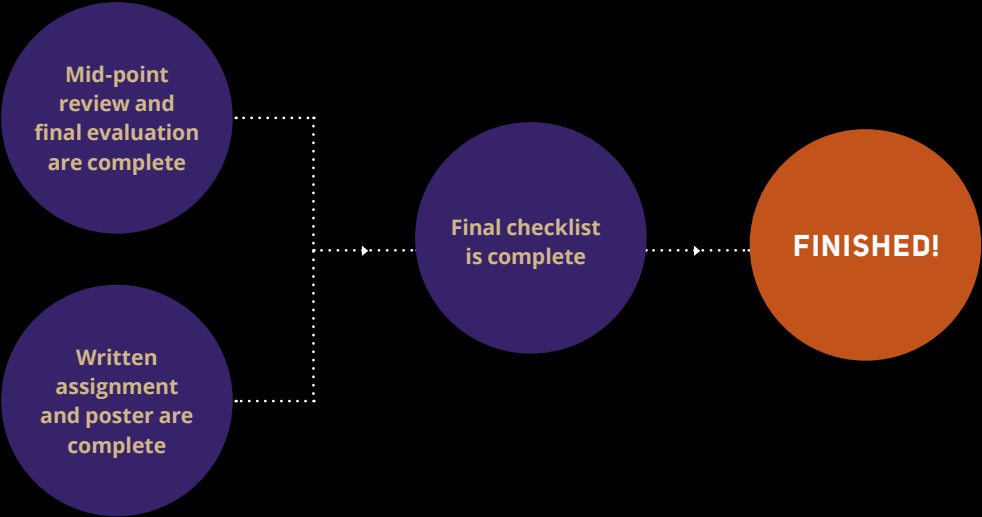
No action is required.

### MPH STUDENT

- ☐ Complete and submit final assignments and final checklist before the last day of the quarter in which credit will be awarded.

### PRACTICUM FACULTY ADVISER

- ☐ Assess the final assignments to ensure they are adequate for academic credit. If edits are required, request that the student revise the final assignments and resubmit. Once these are adequate, annotate on the final checklist that the assignments have been received and that credit can be granted (student will supply the final checklist to their faculty adviser).



**“Hosting an MPH practicum student was a worthwhile experience.  
The student was motivated, engaged, and passionate about the  
work, adding useful knowledge to our program.”**

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
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