



MPH Practicum: Faculty Adviser Role (updated January 2024)

The UW School of Public Health requires that every MPH student complete a practicum to receive their degree. The practicum is a planned, supervised, and evaluated field-based experience, requiring a minimum of 160 hours (4-6 credits) under the guidance of a SPH Faculty Adviser and a Practicum Site Supervisor. It is recommended that students participate with an organization in the same way that others at the organization engage in order to have the most interactive experience possible (ex: if an organization is in-person, an in-person Practicum would be preferred).

The goal of the practicum is to enable students to take the disciplinary knowledge and methods they learned in the classroom and apply them to the field of public health, serving as trainees while expanding the capacity of a public health organization.

About the Role

Practicum Faculty Advisers are UWSPH faculty members who mentor students on their practicum experience. They are expected to provide insights into potential practicum sites and projects; advise students on selecting a balanced set of practice-oriented, competency-based activities; review and approve learning contracts; and evaluate students’ overall practicum experience.

Practicum Process

Students should follow the project timeline proposed in the Learning Contract and submit all forms and deliverables to the Practicum Dropbox **as soon as** they are approved and throughout the practicum. (See Table 1 Stages of Approval) The signed (approved) Learning Contract must be submitted **before** practicum work begins. The Practicum Faculty Adviser must complete the online faculty evaluation **before** the student receives practicum credits.

Table 1: Stages of Approval

	Forms & Deliverables	Action by Student	Action by Faculty Adviser
Pre-Site	N/A	Identifies a practicum faculty adviser.	Reviews this document.
	Affiliation Agreement	If an Affiliation Agreement is not already in place with the site (i.e., if the organization is not on the affiliated agency list in the Practicum Dropbox), email sphpractice@uw.edu the name and email address of the organization contact to start the affiliating process. This can take weeks to a few months to complete. Students cannot start their practicum until the Affiliation Agreement is established.	
	Learning Contract ³	Develops a work plan, including competency-based activities, timeline, and site products.	Reviews and signs the learning contract BEFORE practicum begins.
On-Site	Midpoint Review	Updates progress and changes to the learning contract.	Reviews only (midpoint review is conducted and signed by Site Supervisor).
	Site products	Produces tangible outputs for the site that demonstrate attainment of five MPH Foundational Competencies.	Reviews only (site products are evaluated by Site Supervisor).
	Site Supervisor Concluding Evaluation	Discusses onsite experience and site products with the Site Supervisor.	Reviews only (evaluation is completed by Site Supervisor).
Post-Site	SPH Assignments	Completes a written assignment summarizing and self-evaluating the practicum experience, and a visual assignment for the symposium.	Reviews only.
	Faculty Evaluation (online)	Reviews the Faculty Evaluation Report upon receiving it.	Completes an online evaluation based on a holistic review of the student’s site evaluations, site products, and SPH assignments.

Learning Contract

The learning contract describes the practicum project that the student has created in conjunction with the Faculty Adviser and Site Supervisor, including a description of how this project and how it aligns with the goals of the student, needs of the public health organization, and competency requirements of the practicum.

Competency Development

Each MPH student will work with their Site Supervisor to develop **a minimum of two products** for the site (see *Practicum Products for the Site*) that meet **five of the 22 competencies**. The competencies are mapped to products, but each product does not have to map to all competencies. For example, one product may demonstrate three competencies and the second product may demonstrate the other two competencies. As another example, students may submit five products if each demonstrates attainment of a competency. Competencies and products differ from student to student.

A maximum of **ONE (1)** competency may be selected from the Evidenced-Based Approaches to Public Health section, which helps direct students toward choosing practice-oriented competencies and developing tasks that lead to practical solutions for the site. In Table 2, example 1 is practice-oriented, focusing on team development and project management. Example 2 is research-oriented, focusing on designing survey instruments to measure resource utilization and understand access barriers for the target population. See a complete list of competencies at: <https://sph.washington.edu/students/experiential/practicum/competencies>

Table 2: Practice- vs. Research-Oriented Competency Activities

	Example 1: Practice-oriented competency activity	Example 2: Research-oriented competency activity
Select a Competency	Competency [7] Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health.	Competency [2] Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context.
Describe the competency the practicum plans to meet	I will stay up to date with COVID-19 summary statistics, trends, and indicator performance to strategize partnership plans with community-based organizations, and assess changes to priorities with my organization.	I will design a quantitative survey to assess current utilization of mobile clinic targeting street-based sex workers, and design a qualitative interview guide for understanding specific barriers and facilitators in accessing health services for street-based sex workers.

Prior to your approval of the learning contract, carefully review the details to ensure that the student will:

- Participate with an organization in the same way that others at the organization engage in order to have the most interactive experience possible (ex: if an organization is in-person, an in-person Practicum would be preferred).
- Participate in work that emphasizes **applied public health skills** developed in their degree program.
- Ensure the project's IRB status has been determined. (Practicum projects typically do not require IRB review/approval. If your student's practicum project does, work with your student on how to apply for IRB approval).

Practicum Products for the Site ("Site Products")

Site products are tangible outputs from the student's practicum experience, supervised by a Site Supervisor with expertise in the practicum project area. Examples from prior practicums include:

- An evaluation report describing current Medicaid policy around non-opioid analgesics and barriers to changing it.
- An advocacy brief describing barriers to health and health care and the role of community health workers in developing equitable health systems.
- A framework that Boone County Health Department and their Department of Emergency Preparedness can use to complete a community recovery plan.

Practicum Assignments for the School ("SPH Assignments")

All students must complete a written and a visual assignment at the end of their practicum. This is an opportunity for students to describe, reflect on, and self-evaluate their practicum experience.

A *Written Assignment* includes the following sections:

1. A summary or abstract of the student's practicum experience
2. A brief analysis of the organization, including factors in determining policies and practices that either help or hinder its ability to effectively address its mission (e.g. elimination of structural bias, social inequities, and/or racism)
3. A description of the practicum project
4. Student's self-assessment of competency attainment

A *Visual Assignment* typically involves a poster, video, infographic, digital portfolio, website, or other visual work approved by the Faculty Adviser. This requirement may be fulfilled by a visual site product. (See *Practicum Products for the Site*)

Faculty Evaluation (online) & Practicum Credits

The Faculty Adviser is notified to review student's work online and will complete an online evaluation to certify student's practicum completion. Contact your departmental advisers about practicum registration, add codes, and credits being posted to transcripts.