

# PRACTICE EXPERIENCE HANDBOOK

PUBH 6800



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## LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEW ORLEANS

### School of Public Health

#### **Mission**

To advance health equity through evidenced-based education, research, and practice for populations in the context of a changing climate.

#### **Vision**

A healthier Louisiana population with a workforce addressing the structural and emergent issues affecting public health.

#### **Master of Public Health Competencies**

Students are required to meet at least five competencies, three of which must be foundational competencies, during their practice experience. These competencies will be included in the students' *Practice Experience Proposal* form, the planning document for the practice experience.

#### **Foundational Competencies**

Upon completion of the five MPH core courses, Biologic Basis of Health, and Research Ethics, students should be able to:

#### **Program Specific Competencies**

In addition to the required school competencies, students must also satisfy program-specific competencies for their chosen program.

<b>Foundational Competencies</b>
<b>Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply epidemiological methods to settings and situations in public health practice</li> <li>2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context</li> <li>3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate</li> <li>4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice</li> </ol>
<b>Public Health &amp; Health Care Systems</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings</li> <li>6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and systemic levels</li> </ol>
<b>Planning &amp; Management to Promote Health</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health</li> <li>8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation or critique of public health policies or programs</li> <li>9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention</li> <li>10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management</li> <li>11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs</li> </ol>
<b>Policy in Public Health</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence</li> <li>13. Propose strategies to identify relevant communities and individuals and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes</li> <li>14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations</li> <li>15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity</li> </ol>
<b>Leadership</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue</li> <li>17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges</li> </ol>
<b>Communication</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors</li> <li>19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation to non-academic, non-peer audience with attention to factors such as literacy and health literacy</li> <li>20. Describe the importance of cultural humility in communicating public health content</li> </ol>
<b>Interprofessional Practice</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health</li> </ol>
<b>Systems Thinking</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative</li> </ol>

<b>Program Specific Competencies</b>
<b>Biostatistics and Data Science (BSDS) Competencies</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply principles of inferential statistics and data science to analyze various types of health-related data and decision-making.
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply hypothesis tests for public health and medical-related research questions, select appropriate statistical methods based on the study objectives and data type, and draw conclusions based on the testing results.
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate public health and medical studies and design suitable power analysis and sample size calculations.
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply software and programming skills for data acquisition, management, cleaning, visualization, and analysis.
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply expertise to advise researchers and public health professionals on translating research questions into testable hypotheses to advance public health.
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop skills in communication, interpretation, and presentation of research findings to collaborators or clients
<b>Community Health Science and Policy (CHSP) Competencies</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply behavioral health theories to community health approaches.
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess the impact of community-based intervention on public health outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate proficiency in planning, implementation and evaluation of ethical and culturally aligned public health programs, policies, and/or interventions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply management practices to decision-making in public health.
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop, analyze, and/or evaluate policies for improving the health status of populations. programming
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate potential solutions to health issues affecting individuals and populations, including health disparities, through a socio-ecological lens.
<b>Environmental Health, Climate and Sustainability (EHCS) Competencies</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and assess health impacts of environmental hazards.
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise and communicate the science on climate change and sustainable solutions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop and evaluate policies to equitably address hazards and risks.
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze and interpret data related to hazards, risks and impacts.
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate resilience and adaptation through geospatial planning to address vulnerabilities and risks.
<b>Epidemiology and Population Health (EPPH) Competencies</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Critique the design, analysis and evaluation of an epidemiologic study.
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguish the major sources of bias in epidemiology research and literature and the ways to evaluate and reduce the bias.
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply and perform epidemiologic analyses using linear, logistic, Cox and Poisson regression using a standard statistical package (e.g. SAS, R, or STATA).
<input type="checkbox"/> Perform data analysis to evaluate data for confounding and effect modification (interaction) applying the tools of causal inference in epidemiology.
<input type="checkbox"/> Effectively communicate epidemiologic information to diverse audiences in diverse settings.
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply evidence-based management practices and quality improvement concepts to address health care organization and delivery issues.
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze the impact of political, social, and economic policies on health systems at the local, state, national, and international levels and formulate solutions to key problems.

## Practice Experience

### Overview

The MPH Practice Experience is a project or activity that immerses the student in one or more aspects of public health operations under the guidance of a preceptor. It allows the students to apply what they are learning in a professional public health setting while building skills, abilities, and relationships. Also, students' experiences may inform their future academic and professional plans.

This fieldwork may include but is not limited to community education, health promotion, program planning, program organization or management, and/or grant writing. The practice site criteria include organizations, centers, or programs (governmental and non-governmental organizations) devoted to the health of populations through the delivery of health services, prevention of disease, promotion of health education, and/or advocacy for health care programs and service delivery.

### Acceptance of Practice Experience Proposals

1. At least 10 credit hours including PUBH 6120 plus 6 credit hours of program-required coursework.
2. Students must successfully complete HIPAA training.
3. Students must successfully complete CITI training.
4. Students must successfully complete SPH Code of Conduct.
5. Students must have at least a 3.0 overall grade point average.

Students earn 3 credit hours for their practice experience by registering for PUBH 6800 Practice Experience during the semester in which they do their fieldwork. The deadline for completing the practice experience proposal and related forms is generally in the middle of the semester before the practice experience takes place. The practice experience office will provide specific proposal due dates when they become available.

This handbook, as well as approved practice sites and forms, are available on the [Practice Experience Webpage](#). *Students should read this handbook before talking with their advisors since s/he is responsible for the various requirements contained herein.* In addition to their advisors, students are encouraged to contact the Office of Public Health Practice & Community Engagement if they have any questions.

### Course Director

Donna L. Williams, DrPH

Associate Dean of Public Health Practice & Community Engagement

Email: [dwilli3@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:dwilli3@lsuhsc.edu)

### Instructor

Yvette W. Merritt, MPH, Coordinator, Office of Public Health Practice & Community Engagement

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### Coordinator

Asja Coffil, Practice Coordinator, Office of Public Health Practice & Community Engagement

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## **Integration with PUBH 6600**

The practice experience is a pre-requisite for PUBH 6600, the Integrated Learning Experience. Students should select a site and project with this in mind. The student will build on their experiences at the practice site to complete the course expectations of PUBH 6600. See appendices for more information.

### **Planning**

**Students should plan for their practice experience for the summer or the second fall semester. The practice experience is not offered in the Spring. The practice experience is 200 hours outside of class, so students should plan their schedules to not have a heavy load in the semester in which the practice experience is done. Students SHOULD NOT wait until the semester in which they plan to graduate to enroll in the practice experience. Issues can arise within the practice site that will keep the student from completing the practice experience, necessitating that the student wait another semester to graduate.**

Each Fall and Spring semester, the school will offer an informational meeting to review the purpose and process of the practice experience to assist the student. Students are required to attend the meeting the semester before they intend to enroll in the practice experience. Students who are planning for a practice experience in the fall should attend the spring meeting. Details about the meeting will be emailed to MPH students. During the semester in which a student registers for their practice experience, it is advised that students take no more than two additional courses.

Students should plan to attend an informational session and/or schedule a meeting with the Practice Experience Office in advance of the practicum semester. The meeting is recorded and designed as a planning session for the practice experience to review goals, deliverables, course requirements, secure practice experience site, and complete affiliation agreements when needed.

Students should share this handbook with their preceptors to orient them to the practice experience. Checklists for preceptors and students to use for planning and conducting the practice experience are included in this handbook in the appendix.

### **COVID Vaccination**

Students need to be aware as they plan their practice experiences that the site may require a COVID vaccine and plan accordingly. Even though LSUHSC is not requiring vaccination, practice sites may be requiring and students must abide. Students who have elected to not be vaccinated should inquire as they are completing the paperwork and then make arrangements to be vaccinated before the semester starts. They should not wait until the semester starts, as they will lose at least three weeks of the semester.

### **Site Selection**

Students should select a practice experience based on their academic program, previous work and academic experience, and career interests. Their advisors can offer insight on potential sites, as well as preceptors and available projects. When identifying the best semester for the student's practice experience, the advisor and student should also keep course load, personal needs, and other interests of the student in mind. Students can begin discussions with their advisors about the practice experience as early as their first semester; however, they must submit the paperwork by the deadline in the semester before registration.

**Professionalism** The practice experience is as much a practice of professionalism as anything else. Students must communicate with sites in a professional manner. If plans change, inform the site and site preceptor with whom you are working.

A practice experience must take place at an approved practice site. The student should consult the SPH-approved practice sites list on the [practice experience](#) webpage and meet with his/her advisor for assistance. The Practice Experience Office also is available for guidance on choosing a site and may be able to locate additional sites that meet students' interests. Contacts on the placement list will be familiar with the practice experience, and students should contact them directly to see if the site has any current openings or needs. In general, a student may not use their current work position as their practice experience. A student considering a practice experience at their current employment must consult the course director.

International sites provide a rewarding experience and are encouraged. However, it is the student's responsibility to work closely with the Practice Experience Office throughout the process to explore if the site and preceptor can be approved. Political security and health status of the country and air/ground travel itself are examined during the process. Additional paperwork may be required. *For all of these reasons, it is pertinent that the student makes initial contact early.*

If the student decides on a site that has not been previously approved, the student should contact the Practice Experience Office so they can work together on placement site and preceptor approval, including the *New Practice Site Approval Form*.

Practice placements should be outside the LSUHSC School of Public Health, as required by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). This policy promotes the exposure of students to new working environments, organizations, programs, and projects, as well as helps them form relationships with professionals in their fields of interest. The exception to this is university-affiliated public health practice programs with significant community engagement. See the Practice Experience Office for more information or approval.

Students are allowed to complete their practicum at their worksite; however, it must be different from their day-to-day work (preferably in a different department) and the supervisor must be someone other than their direct supervisor. Typically, students in this situation are working in larger institutions where this is much more feasible. Worksite practice experiences must be approved by the Associate Dean in advance.

The SPH respects that a student's past does not have to determine their future, including your academic pursuits and career path. We also acknowledge the policies of practice placements that choose to perform background checks on anyone working (including students) at their sites. For these reasons, a policy regarding students with felony convictions or current criminal legal system involvement is available [here](#) describing the steps necessary to best engage in a practice placement should such history apply to you.

### **International Sites**

Planning for international practice experiences must start a minimum of two semesters in advance. Students pursuing international practice experiences must fulfill [Chancellor Memorandum-65](#) International Educational Experiences requirements. The [Office of International Services](#) maintains informative information, documents, and outlines the process for requesting an international educational experience at the institution level.

Students interested in completing their practice experience at a site that does not have an existing MOU agreement in place must obtain approval through the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Students must work with the Office of Public Health Practice and Community Engagement and their site preceptor to complete and submit required [General Forms](#) to the Office of International Services at least 4 – 6 months in advance of the proposed departure for the trip. Also, students must register and create a profile in [MyTrips](#), the main campus' International Travel Registry, and submit proof of registry with the Office of International Services CM-65, Non-MOU site application.

### **Preceptor**

Once the site is approved, the preceptor must be identified. The preceptor mentors the student and oversees the practice experience. He/she also will be responsible for assessing the student's progress and performance. The student's work style and interests should be complementary to his/her preceptor's and fit with the site's work environment. Failure to establish or maintain communication with your preceptor is not an excuse for missed hours or not attaining signatures for documents. Students are expected to communicate the preceptor's issue with Ms. Merritt or Dr. Williams in advance. Failure to do so could result in incomplete hours and failure of the course.

The preceptor must be a practicing public health professional who meets the following educational/professional criteria:

- MPH (or equivalent degree) plus three years of professional public health experience, or at least five years of professional public health experience
- Approachable, competent in mentoring, interested in the student's academic career goals
- Close family members, friends, or faculty of the student **may not serve** as the student's preceptor.

*Preceptors that have not been previously approved must be approved by the course director.* The preceptor must have expertise in the selected public health area and meet the above qualifications to serve as a mentor and supervisor. Approval is a simple process. The practice experience director reviews the resume/CV of each potential preceptor to assess his/her qualifications. Should someone not meet the above criteria, the practice experience director can grant an exception based upon their academic and professional background. Students should share this handbook with preceptors to orient them to the practice experience. Checklists for preceptors and students to use for planning and conducting the practice experience are included in this handbook.

### Preceptor's Role and Responsibilities

- Orient the student to the organization's goals, structure, internal communication, and partners.
- Make him/herself available to students.
- Provide oversight, guidance, and adequate resources to facilitate the completion of the agreed-upon activities. Invite and encourage the student to learn new skills, and attend meetings, training, and other events that will enhance the learning experience.
- Integrate the student with regular staff and introduce the student to others who can assist with career opportunities.
- Provide direction to supplemental resources, opportunities for networking, and career advancement.

- Provide periodic feedback and guidance to the student in writing and/or through meetings, and the progress report and final evaluation.
- Contact the Office of Practice Experience, as needed.
- Work with the student to complete their progress report after 100 hours have been completed.
- Assess the student's performance and complete the Evaluation of Student form and submit it to the SPH in a timely fashion at the end of the practice experience.

### **Proposal Development**

Once the practice site and preceptor have been selected, the student should schedule a meeting with the preceptor to outline the practice experience project, including competencies, deliverables (products), work activities, start and end dates, and work schedule, which will be documented on the *Practice Experience Proposal* form. The Practice Experience office will meet with each student individually to review their proposal submission prior to approval.

*Placements that are clerical, clinical, or mostly observation or shadowing are not allowed.* Preceptors should review their organizations' policies and expectations applicable to the student. Also, the preceptor should review this handbook in its entirety and consult with the practice experience course director or coordinator for additional details, as needed.

### Proposal Form

The *Practice Experience Proposal* form has several sections that must be completed. To prevent having to redo the form, the course director recommends that students submit a draft of the form **before** asking for their preceptors' signatures.

### Competencies

The proposal includes a minimum of five competencies, three of which must be foundational competencies, which the student will meet by the end of the practice experience. Students must choose among the competencies listed in the *LSUHSC School of Public Health MPH Competencies* section of this handbook.

### Deliverables (Products)

Deliverables are tangible and functional products or services that the organization can adopt such as 1) operation manual 2) data dictionary 3) strategic plan based on an organization self-assessment 4) SAS Code 5) data analysis report or 6) policy brief. Each deliverable "product" must coincide and be paired with the competencies chosen to be covered during the student's practice experience. Deliverables must be turned in at the end of the semester to be added to students' practice experience files.

### Work Activities

For each deliverable, list the specific activities and tasks that the student will undertake during the practice experience to execute the deliverables. Work activities are 1) an entire project in an area of public health practice (fulfilling one of the core functions of public health: assessment, policy development, or assurance) or 2) individual activities as components of a large project.

### Start and Finish Dates

Practice experiences must be completed within the semester the student is registered for PUBH 6800; semester-specific start and end dates will be provided by the course director, but generally are the first day of the semester to start and a date to be determined at the end of the semester to stop.

Situations may occur, such as a practice experience that is part of a formal internship that crosses semesters, that do not allow the work to be done in one semester. Students should reach out to the practice office early in the process to discuss. Any special circumstances should be documented with formal written approval.

#### *Work Schedule*

The student's weekly work schedule should be documented on the form. It should allow for sufficient time for the student to complete the required 200 hours and complete all work activities. **The course includes a required didactic in-class meeting.** Classes meet at 8:00 AM to allow students to meet without interrupting the practice experience schedule and to not conflict with other courses. Time spent in class or working on class-specific activities are not considered practice hours and do not count toward the 200-hour requirement.

#### **Preceptor – Student Agreement**

The *Preceptor – Student Agreement* form is signed by both the student and the preceptor. It defines the roles and responsibilities of both parties and is submitted along with the student's proposal.

#### **Submitting Forms**

The student must submit completed and signed *Practice Experience Proposal* and *Preceptor – Student Agreement* forms to the Practice Experience Office by the announced deadline for proposals, which is generally in the middle of the semester before the practice experience takes place. The course director of PUBH 6800 will provide specific proposal due dates when they become available. Students whose practice experiences placement sites and/or preceptors have not been previously approved must also submit the appropriate forms for new sites and preceptors.

#### **Research Approval**

Since practice experiences are by nature practice-based, Institutional Review Board (IRB) is generally not needed. However, should a student need IRB approval for a component of their practice experience, the student must see to it that they follow the [LSUHSC Institutional Review Board](#)'s procedures. While securing the site, the student must initiate a conversation with the practice experience course director and proceed with the correct course of action for approval through the LSUHSC SPH Research Office. In some cases, the student will need to obtain IRB approval from both LSUHSC and the organization where the student is placed. Should the topic of research surface in any way during the practice experience, it is the student's responsibility to contact the practice experience course director immediately and provide details before proceeding.

#### **Registration**

A copy of all required, approved *Practice Experience Proposal* and *Preceptor – Student Agreement* forms must be on file with the Practice Experience Office by the proposal deadline before a student is allowed to register for PUBH 6800 Practice Experience. Also, if the student's practice site and/or preceptor are new and have not been previously approved, the student also must submit a *New Site Approval* form, and the preceptor's CV/resume. Deadlines for completing those forms are generally in the middle of the semester before the practice experience takes place, and specific deadlines are announced as they become available.

Since PUBH 6800 is a restricted course, students will need permission codes to pre-register online. After the course director approves all of a student's practice experience forms, and after

the student has met with the course instructors to review the proposal, a permission code will be given. **If the student does not register, no credit will be granted, regardless of whether an experience occurred.**

### **Publication Approval**

Publication information is included in [LSUHSC Chancellor Memorandum 33 \[CM 33\]](#)- *Policies and Procedures Governing the Supervisory Role of the Institution over Student Activities Including Student Publications*, which addresses the rights, responsibilities, and limitations of students who wish to publish material while at LSU Health Sciences Center.

### **Academic Probation**

Students on Academic Probation must fulfill probationary requirements before completing the practice experience. Information on Academic Probation is located in the LSUHSC SPH Student Handbook.

### **Policy on Felonies**

Policy Title: Students with Criminal Justice Proceedings or Felony Convictions Enrolling in BSPH or MPH Practice Course

1. Any MPH or BSPH student with pending felony charges or who have been convicted of a felony in the must notify the Associate Dean for Practice prior to completion of initial 10 credit hours of coursework or for continuing students, within 10 days of being charged. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Associate Dean for Practice prior to contacting potential preceptors, completing any paperwork, or enrolling in the course. Failure to report may result in an inability to register for or complete the associated courses.
2. The Associate Dean for Practice will meet with the student to discuss their options for field work. The student will be allowed to choose between being placed within the school or externally, but informed that the placement will require full-disclosure with a disclosure letter signed by the student and the preceptor.
3. The Associate Dean for Practice will implement the disclosure form as provided by university legal counsel. The signed form will be kept on file in the Dean's office.

In accordance with FERPA and CM-56.

### **Questions/Further Assistance**

A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) is included as Appendix E. If you need additional assistant at any time please contact Ms. Merritt, Coordinator, Public Health Practice & Community Engagement.

### **Completing the Practice Experience**

#### **Evaluating the Experience**

The student must submit the following to the course director by the semester deadlines posted on the course's Moodle site. Students should review them with the preceptor before submitting and get the required signatures. All submissions are made within Moodle.

Any time the student and/or preceptor have problems or questions during the practice experience, they should contact the course director. If the course director is not available, they should contact the SPH's Coordinator of Public Health Practice & Community Engagement.

#### **Mid-Semester Progress**

The student submits the *Practice Experience Progress Report* and *Student Work Log* of hours to date. If the student's practice experience has changed from the approved proposal, the student should document these changes on the Practice Experience Progress Report. If these changes vary greatly from the original approved proposal, the course director may ask the student and their preceptor to complete a revised proposal form.

### **Final Reports**

Near the end of the practice experience, the preceptor should complete the *Evaluation of Student*. The form must be completed and emailed directly by the preceptor to the SPH Office of the Practice Experience by the semester deadline posted on Moodle.

The student completes a *Student Work Log* for the second half of the semester and the *Evaluation of Practice Experience* form. Also, the student submits a final paper in which he/she reports and reflects on his/her experience. Guidance on writing the final paper is available online.

### **Course Grade**

The practice experience course director issues a grade of Pass or Fail grading based upon completion of 200 hours, the above instruments, and successful demonstration of the competencies based upon deliverable submitted. In addition, attendance at the first class of the semester is a requirement to pass the course. Additional information on course evaluation is included in the PUBH 6800 syllabus.

### **Site Review**

At least annually, the SPH's Coordinator of Public Health Practice & Community Engagement will assess each site's participation status, available preceptors, and public health disciplines needed. The evaluations by students will be reviewed to monitor the public health suitability, adherence to approved proposals, appropriate supervision, and workplace safety. The school posts the current list of approved practice experience sites on the [practice experience webpage](#).

## Appendices

### Preceptor Checklist

- Orient the student to the organization's goals, structure, internal communication, and partners.
- The student is expected to show respect and courtesy toward all staff (including the preceptor, other staff and interns), clients/patients and their families, and community partners.
- The student is expected to use discretion in timing questions and discussions with the preceptor. It is often best to have such conversations (express any concerns or disagreements) in private, not in the presence of other staff and/or clients/patients.
- The student must respect all confidences revealed including data on individuals, social information, records, fee systems, and professional policies. No mention may be made of confidential or proprietary information to any individual not directly involved.
- Technology Policy – The student is responsible for adhering to all policies for the organization regarding the use of electronic devices (texting, tweeting/Facebook, cellphones, surfing the web, playing a videogame, email, etc.).
- Attendance Policy – The student is responsible for adhering to the agreed-upon schedule. He/she should be punctual and should not leave before the agreed-upon time, without first checking for permission from the preceptor.
- Dress Code: The student must exhibit a professional appearance both in manner and dress and must follow the professional standards of behavior expected in the work environment.

### Student Checklist

- Confirm all eligibility requirements are met.
- Course Prerequisites:
  - At least 10 credit hours including PUBH 6120 plus 6 credit hours of program-required coursework.
- Successful completion of HIPAA and CITI training, and the SPH Code of Conduct.
- Good academic standing.
- One or two-semester in before the practice experience takes place, under the guidance of the academic advisor; identify the semester in which to conduct practice experience.
- Identify an agency, program, or organization with a qualified preceptor for your placement.
- The student's advisor, another faculty member, or the practice experience coordinator may help the student identify a site.
- The site and preceptor must be approved by the course director.
- Create a proposal that reflects your interests and goals.
- Meet with the preceptor to develop deliverables and identify competencies and the activities that will meet your goals and the needs of the site.
- The student confirms them with the practice experience course director.
- The preceptor and student finalize the plan, and both sign the *Practice Experience Proposal and Preceptor – Student Agreement* forms.
- Submit the signed *Practice Experience Proposal and Preceptor – Student Agreement* forms to the Practice Experience Office before the proposal deadline.
- Meet with the Practice Experience Office to review proposal and receive feedback/approval.
- Register for PUBH 6800 Practice Experience.

## **During the Practice Experience**

Attend and participate in didactic portion of the class. Complete the required mid-semester reports and submit them to the Practice Experience Office by the deadline posted on the PUBH 6800 Moodle site. Review reports and deliverables with the preceptor before submitting and get the required signatures.

- *Practice Experience Progress Report & Work Log* of hours to date.

Near the end of the practice experience, check with the preceptor concerning the *Evaluation of Student* form they are to complete and submit. The form must be completed and emailed directly by the preceptor to the SPH Practice Experience Office by the semester deadline posted on Moodle. Complete the following by the deadline posted on Moodle, and submit them to the Practice Experience Office.

- *Work Log* for the second half of the semester
- *Evaluation of Practice Experience* form

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **When do I begin the practice experience?**

As a minimum requirement, all MPH students must successfully complete at least 10 credit hours including BIOS core, EPID core, and your program core before beginning their practice experience. Students are strongly recommended to take more courses before engaging in their practice experience. Students also must complete HIPAA, CITI, and SPH Code of Conduct, as well as be in good academic standing.

### **Can I waive a prerequisite or complete one at the same time as my practice experience?**

Prerequisites are preparation for practice experience and cannot be waived or taken during the practice experience.

### **Can I do my practice experience over two semesters?**

Practice experiences must be completed within the semester the student is registered for PUBH 6800. Students with extenuating circumstances must contact the Practice Experience Office to discuss and for formal approval from the course director.

### **How and where do I start?**

Talk with your advisor about when you will be eligible to begin the practice experience.

Discuss with your advisor what options are available to you. **(You are responsible for identifying and securing an appropriate project with specific competencies and learning objectives, and project activities.)**

### **Is it necessary to get my advisor's approval to begin the practice experience?**

Yes, it is necessary so s/he can continue tracking your progress through your academic degree program. You should talk with your advisor before planning your proposal and make sure your advisor is aware of your final plans.

### **How do I find a practice placement?**

Review the [online](#) list of school-approved sites. Also, talk with your advisor, other faculty, and students who have completed their practice experience requirement, and the course director for help.

**Can I conduct my practice experience out of the country?**

Yes, if the site, preceptor, and country are approved. Check with the practice experience office regarding your interest early. Additional paperwork may be requested.

**Can I do my practice experience at the LSUHSC School of Public Health?**

Regardless of where the practice experience is done, it must be at a school-approved site with a school-approved preceptor. There are some practice programs that sit within the School that are eligible, but they must be approved in advance.

**Do I register for the practice experience?**

Yes, register for PUBH 6800 for the semester you are conducting your practice experience hours.

**Can I still graduate if my practice experience isn't completed?**

No, all MPH graduates must have met all requirements with documents completed and approved, before graduating.

**What if I still have questions?**

Contact Ms. Merritt ([ymerr1@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:ymerr1@lsuhsc.edu)), Coordinator of Public Health Practice & Community Engagement. Her contact information is in the overview section of the handbook.

**Where do I go if I'm not satisfied with my placement/preceptor?**

Contact Ms. Merritt. You may also want to talk with your advisor.

**Can I continue my practice experience after the semester is over?**

It is not unusual for students to want to continue to their work with the practice experience site.

There are several mechanisms for doing so:

1. As a volunteer (or employee). That is work you will do on your own outside of association with the school. No school approval is needed for this. This would simply be an arrangement between yourself and the site. Remember that the hours you spend volunteering can be submitted toward a Service Cord recognition at graduation (link).
2. As an independent study. This is actual course credit of 1, 2, or 3 hours. These arrangements have to be made well in advance, as this is a special class set up just for your project. Students should also discuss with their advisor, as this could count as an elective toward their degree. All school and university policies and procedures including tuition apply.

**What is a deliverable?**

A deliverable is a concrete product that anyone can look at and clearly see the corresponding competency demonstrated. Think about an outside person reading the competency and looking at the deliverable. Do they clearly correspond? Some are pretty straightforward. For example, if your competency is “Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate,” a data analysis report should clearly show this. However, some might require creativity to demonstrate the competency. Consider “Apply principles of leadership, governance, and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making.” You would have to demonstrate through some kind of document the principles of leadership, governance, and management AND show how you have created a vision, empowered other, fostered collaboration, and guided decision making (see the next question). A lot is going on there. Choose your competencies with this in mind.

**What if my competency contains the word “and”?**

Whenever the word “and” is used, it means you must do ALL of the things in the statement. See the previous question. Another example is for “Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation” the expectation would be some written document AND some evidence of an oral presentation (PowerPoint, poster, etc.).

**What is a(n) (policy brief, whitepaper, infographic, literature review, etc.)?**

If you have said you are going to produce a very specific product, make sure you know what exactly it is that you are promising. A literature review is not just reading three papers. An infographic is not a bulleted list on a pink background. Make sure you are clear and that you’ve cleared it with Dr. Williams and/or Ms. Merritt. The four listed are not meant to be a definitive list.

*Resources*

Policy brief: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/policy-briefs/>

Whitepaper: <https://www.instructionalsolutions.com/blog/how-to-write-white-paper>

Infographic: <https://visualisinghealth.com/design-guidelines/>

Literature review: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/literature-reviews/>

Qualitative analysis: <https://baselinesupport.campuslabs.com/hc/en-us/articles/204305675-How-to-analyze-qualitative-data>

Systems thinking tools: <https://health-policy-systems.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1478-4505-12-51/tables/1>

Needs assessment: <https://www.cdc.gov/training-development/php/about/assess-training-needs-conducting-needs-analysis.html>

**How do I submit my deliverables?**

All deliverables are to be submitted to Moodle. The name of the document should include a number that corresponds to your proposal. If, for example, the first deliverable you have listed on your proposal is a literature review, name it something like “D1 literature review.” If the third one on your proposal is SAS code, name it “D3 SAS code.” No one should have to guess as to which deliverable goes with which competencies. Also, be sure all documents are labeled within the document with appropriate identifying information. For example, SAS code should have an identifying title on the first page that says what the code does.

**I have “performing effectively on interpersonal teams” as one of my competencies. How do I document that?**

At a MINIMUM, the expectation would be a team list including roles and meeting minutes.

**My practice site does not want me to share the work I am doing with anyone. How do I document my competencies?**

Your preceptor should understand from the very start that this is a class, and you will be expected to demonstrate your work. That being stated, if you are working with confidential data, we do not in any way want you to compromise anyone’s confidentiality. Work with the practice office to determine what can be submitted to meet your requirements. Aggregate data reports are one example.

**One of my deliverables is a paper. Are there any particular requirements?**

Papers can differ depending on the purpose, but some things would be expected of every paper. Any paper should have a title page and citations. The paper should also be grammatically and factually correct. Most papers should have some kind of introduction/statement of the issue and

some kind of conclusion/recommendations. Discuss any specifics with Dr. Williams or Ms. Merritt.

### **Integration of PUBH 6800 and PUBH 6600**

Beginning in Fall 2024, The separate courses of the Practice Experience (PUBH 6800) and Culminating Experience (PUBH 6600) will be linked to provide continuation of service to our community partners by the students and provide more individualized experiences.

This is responsive to student (course evaluations, mid semester survey) and community feedback (site preceptors want students to continue past current hours).

This competency-based process will include deliverables for both the Practice Experience and Culminating Experience courses as outlined below. In addition, students must demonstrate attainment of at least five competencies, of which three must be foundational competencies, in the applied practice experience. For the culminating experience, students must demonstrate attainment of at least one additional program-specific competency in addition to core competency 19 (Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation). The below core competencies may also be appropriate depending upon the student's project:

- 14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations
- 15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity
- 22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

The primary shift in this process is with the Culminating Experience building on the work done during the Practice Experience. The final paper and presentation for the Culminating Experience is expected to be a high-quality written product that is built around the students' educational and professional objectives. In addition, the product should serve to advance knowledge and address the issues and population identified during the Practice Experience. The preceptors will be also invited to the final presentations and receive a copy of the final paper of the student affiliated with their site at the conclusion of the Culminating Experience course.

The following is a listing of the sections of the final product paper for the Culminating Experience along with examples of how products from the Practice Experience would fit in.

I. State the issue

- Describe the issue: Is it controversial? Is this a new concern or has it been around for years?
- Advocate – why should we care about this issue? Why do you care?
  - i. ***Competency: Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations***
    - 1. *NOTE: Students must produce a product that would be part of an advocacy campaign or effort (e.g., legislative briefing paper or fact sheet, advocacy strategy outline, etc.) to fulfill this competency*

II. Background

- Data, evidence-based practices, current snapshot
- Current policies, are these policies working?
  - i. ***Competency: Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity***

- Practice Experience Deliverable Examples:
  - i. Literature review
  - ii. Policy brief
  - iii. Survey
- III. Challenges
  - What are the main issues that need to be addressed?
  - What perspectives should be considered? How would you communicate with the different audiences?
    - i. ***Competency: Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation***
  - Practice Experience Deliverable Examples:
    - i. Data collected and analyzed including data collection tools and code
    - ii. Communications plan
    - iii. Outreach materials
- IV. Discipline Role
  - Describe the role of your discipline in addressing this issue.
  - List the program-specific competencies you feel can be addressed in responding to this issue. Describe why you chose those specific competencies.
    - i. ***Competency: Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors***
  - Practice Experience Deliverable Examples:
    - i. Presentations
    - ii. Infographics
- V. Summary and Overall Response
  - Implications of the issue and its effect on public health including potential policy needs, intervention strategies
    - i. ***Competency: Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue***
  - **Re-Aim:** translatability and public health impact is evaluated by examining all five of the following dimensions: ([http://www.re-aim.hnfe.vt.edu/about\\_re-aim/index.html](http://www.re-aim.hnfe.vt.edu/about_re-aim/index.html))
  - Practice Experience Deliverable Examples:
    - i. Evaluation plan
    - ii. Community needs assessment

Upon successful completion of the Practice Experience, students will then be allowed to register for the Culminating Experience. The course director for the Culminating Experience will be provided the list of qualifying students with their site location, preceptor, and deliverables at the end of each semester the Practice Experience is offered.

### **Acknowledgments**

Louisiana State University Health Science Center in Shreveport

University of Arkansas Medical Sciences Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health University of Iowa College of Public Health

University of Minnesota School of Public Health

University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health