

Guidelines for
Master of Public Health
Field Practice

*Public Health Program
The University of Tennessee
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**SPECIAL NOTE TO STUDENTS
REGARDING
FIELD PRACTICE/MASTER'S ESSAY**

Student Eligibility for Participation

1. Must have completed a minimum of 15 semester hours of graduate course work for master's essay option or a minimum of 24 semester hours for field practice option.
2. Must have earned an overall grade point average of 3.0 or higher.

Initiating Actions to be taken by student no later than one semester prior to desired placement (for master's essay, no later than twelfth week of the first semester of study)

1. Obtain and review carefully, *Guidelines for Master of Public Health Field Practice/Master's Essay*"
2. Complete and submit to advisor:
 - a) Student Request for Field Practice or Master's Essay" (PH-09) form
 - b) An up-to-date résumé (see reverse side)
3. Schedule an individual conference with advisor
4. Following discussion with advisor, prepare Summary Sheet for master's essay (ME-15), if applicable

Constraints

1. The master's essay option is restricted to those students receiving Public Health Academic Program Committee (PHAPC) approval of petition.
2. A student must not initiate contact with potential field organizations (particularly in the Knoxville area) without express permission of the faculty advisor.
3. If field practice is desired out of state, additional time for negotiation will be necessary.
4. A student may not take more than one 3 credit hour course during field practice scheduled full-time for the summer months unless a petition is addressed to the PHAPC, which will rule on the request by majority vote.

MPH Faculty

Recommended Format for Résumé

Name

local mailing address

local phone #s
email address

Education (chronological listing with undergraduate degree first)

University, degree, major, minor, date

(For MPH, indicate anticipated graduation date: _____ and the following descriptor:

An accredited graduate program in public health

Employment¹ (chronological listing most recent first)

Dates/position title/organization/location

- responsibilities

Health-Related Volunteer Experience² (chronological listing most recent first)

Date/position title/organization, agency, or community/location

- responsibilities

Special or Technical Skills

- specialized training
- computer/software proficiencies
- languages
- programming

Certifications/Licensure²

Professional Affiliations

- list professional organizations and dates
- cite involvement

Honors²

- cite awards, honor societies, fellowships, graduation with honors, special recognition

Invited Presentations²

Publications²

International Experience²

Notes:¹Do not include non-health related employment (e.g., food server, clerk) unless the position included supervision of others or other professional-level duties.

² Omit heading, unless you have information to report in these sections.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Master of Public Health Program

MISSION

The Graduate Public Health Program at The University of Tennessee provides quality education and leadership to promote health in human populations through interdisciplinary instruction, research and community service.

VISION

The MPH Program is recognized for its empowerment of students pursuing public health careers which focus on community health improvement.

GOALS

The goals of the Public Health Program reflect the major functions of the program and assist in the attainment of the mission and movement toward the vision. The goal statements are linked to instruction, research, and service.

Instructional Goal: Preparation of future professionals competent in public health core content and methodological approaches.

Research Goal: Public health faculty and students engaged in research projects that address health concerns and community health improvement.

Service Goal: Public health faculty and students engaged in community, government, and professional service to benefit populations at the local, state, and national levels.

FIELD PRACTICE

In fulfillment of the MPH degree requirements, students must complete 42 semester hours of study consisting of public health foundation courses, concentration courses in a public health specialty, and electives selected from other disciplines relevant to perceived individual needs for specific academic exposures and career development. Six (6) of the 42 semester hours of credit are earned through the completion of a field practice internship arranged with an affiliated health agency or organization involved in health-related programs. Alternatively, the six (6) hours may be earned by completion of the master's essay option (see *GUIDELINES FOR MASTER'S ESSAY*).

The internship may be completed as a full-time block experience for a period of nine weeks or as a part-time involvement extending over a longer period of time. The latter approach typically requires 22.5 hours per week for a full semester of sixteen weeks. The 360 contact hours are viewed as the minimum needed to satisfy the MPH field experience requirement. Field time may be increased beyond the minimum if mutually agreeable to the field organization and to the student intern.

GUIDELINES FOR MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD PRACTICE

I. Field Practice and the Master of Public Health Curriculum

- A. Field practice is a very important component of the MPH program because it allows application of academic theory, concepts and skills in a realistic setting. Field experience also expands the student's understanding of the variety of organizations engaged in health-related activities.
- B. Although primarily a learning opportunity for which the public health intern earns six (6) semester hours of credit (PH 587-88), the field practice program is beneficial to a participating field organization in that a placement:
 - 1. allows the organization to contribute to the professional preparation of MPH students.
 - 2. provides additional personnel resources for the completion of special projects.
 - 3. offers the organization the fresh perspective of the public health intern.
 - 4. develops a working relationship between the field organization and the University of Tennessee.
- C. Field practice requires that the student be involved in the work of the field organization on either a full-time basis (40 hrs/wk) for nine (9) weeks or on a part-time basis (22.5 hrs/wk) for the sixteen (16) weeks of a semester. The exact calendar dates are arranged between the public health intern's faculty advisor and the field organization. The public health intern's role is typically that of "staff assistant" in the field organization.
- D. An additional three (3) semester hours of credit (PH 589) may be earned by those participating in an approved extended placement. An "extended placement" is defined as a full-time placement involving a minimum of twelve (12) weeks or a placement involving relocation.
- E. Stipends, although not required for field organization participation, are welcomed because the intern may need to relocate.
- F. In order for students to be eligible for participation in field training they must have completed twenty-four (24) semester hours of didactic courses with an overall grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- G. Public Health interns are matched with field organizations on the basis of the student's academic and prior work experience, individual interests, and professional needs. The field organization may interview the student and retains the right of final approval of each intern placement.

II. Field Practice Goals and Objectives

- A. The general goal of the field practice is to strengthen the student's personal philosophy and understanding of a particular area of public health. This is achieved by familiarizing the intern with the:
 - 1. Practice of public health to help the intern identify with the profession of public health.
 - 2. Organizational and administrative dimensions of public health.
 - 3. Functional activities and involvements of a specialty area of public health.

- B. The following specific objectives guide progress toward the general goal. Planned experiences should contribute to the student's general preparation by offering the intern an opportunity to:
 - 1. Apply knowledge and skills within the framework of an appropriate field organization through:
 - a. Experience in working with and without supervision within the assigned organization.
 - b. Exploration of the general operations of the organization.
 - c. Examination of the organization's responsibilities and constraints.
 - d. Exposure to various staff, board or community meetings.
 - e. Working with the organization's various publics and programs.
 - 2. Increase self-confidence in one's ability through:
 - a. Involvement in planning, organizing, or implementing activities or projects.
 - b. Involvement in evaluation activities and self-evaluation.
 - c. Involvement in data collection and research investigations, as applicable.
 - d. Involvement in facilitating group process.
 - e. Involvement in report development.

III. Responsibilities of the UT Public Health Program

- A. Members of the Public Health faculty will contact potential field organizations to determine their willingness to host a student during a specific period of time.
- B. Upon notification that a field organization is willing to accept a public health intern, the faculty advisor will:
 - 1. Determine the student(s) best suited to the expressed needs of the field organization.
 - 2. Send an official letter requesting placement (to be completed usually two months prior to the start of the desired field practice period.)
 - 3. Forward the student's résumé to acquaint the field organization with the public health intern.
 - 4. Provide the field organization with guidelines for conducting the field practice and a copy of the evaluation instrument.
 - 5. Work with the field organization to develop a satisfactory plan of learning objectives and activities for the public health intern.
 - 6. Secure appropriate University signatures if contractual agreements are required.
- C. Faculty advisors will orient students to the purpose of field practice and its role as an integral part of the MPH degree curriculum. In addition, the faculty advisors will:
 - 1. Share preliminary information relating to possible field practice sites.
 - 2. Guide the student in formulating personal objectives for field practice and assist in the selection of a field organization able to provide the desired experiences.
 - 3. Provide and explain "Field Experience Check List."
 - 4. Discuss with the student a format for the development and submission of field practice reports.
 - 5. Discuss the method of evaluation of student performance.
 - 6. Indicate the continuing availability of the faculty advisor throughout the field practice period to confer regarding the student's learning experiences and progress toward objectives.
 - 7. Meet with the student at the end of the field practice to discuss and summarize the field evaluation for inclusion in the student's permanent academic record.

IV. Responsibilities of the Field Organization

- A. Accepts responsibility for collaboration with the UT Public Health Program in providing field practice for a specific public health intern for a designated period of time and in so doing, provides a worksite that offers the intern appropriate experiences to assist in professional development.
- B. Designates by name, business address, e-mail address, phone number, and academic degree(s), a field preceptor who shall be responsible for planning and conducting (in consultation with the public health intern's faculty advisor) the field practice experience. As well as performing this primary function, the field preceptor should:
 - 1. Assist the public health intern in determining specific, mutually agreeable, written objectives for the field experience.
 - 2. Orient the public health intern to the field organization's mission, programs, policies, and other information.
 - 3. Commit time for instructional interaction and dialogue with the intern.
 - 4. Provide supervision of the public health intern's activities.
 - 5. Plan for any visit by the faculty advisor during the field practice period.
 - 6. Review field practice reports, and, if indicated, resolve conflicts with field organization policy.
 - 7. Prepare an evaluation of the public health intern and discuss the ratings and comments with the intern. (Standard evaluation form will be provided by UT Program).
 - 8. Transmit the public health intern's final evaluation to the faculty advisor.
 - 9. Share any comments and/or suggestions about the field practice program or the MPH curriculum with the faculty advisor.

V. Responsibilities of the Student

- A. During the Field Practice Period
 - 1. Follows policies, rules, and regulations of the field organization.
 - 2. Maintains the same working hours as the organization's employees, if the student is scheduled full-time.
 - 3. Obtains professional liability insurance coverage, if necessary and not provided by field organization. (Available by purchase from staff in 390 HPER.)

(V. Responsibilities of the Student, continued)

4. Seeks the field preceptor's guidance and appraisal of performance throughout the field practice period.
5. Shares with the field preceptor any feelings and ideas concerning the field practice as it progresses.
6. Plans for conferences with the field preceptor.
7. Plans participation in activities and secures approval of the field preceptor.
8. Participates in the field preceptor's planning for visits by the faculty advisor.
9. Prepares a preliminary draft of the final field practice report and clears it with the field preceptor and/or other appropriate field organization personnel.

B. After the Field Practice Period

1. Completes final field practice report and submits it to the faculty advisor and forwards a copy to the field preceptor.
2. Forwards letter of appreciation to the field preceptor.
3. Prepares for conference with faculty advisor.
4. Discusses evaluation summary with faculty advisor.
5. Summarizes field practice report and shares with other MPH students.

VI. Field Practice Reports

A. Purpose of Field Practice Reports

1. To demonstrate an ability to communicate at a level appropriate to the degree and the discipline.
2. To structure and organize the student's learning experience to enhance integration, synthesis and conceptualization of the field placement activities. (i.e., thinking through and putting various daily involvements into perspective)
3. To provide a permanent summary and record of the professional training experiences and exposures encountered while participating in field practice.
4. To enhance and strengthen the relationship of the field preceptor and the intern's faculty advisor.

(VI. Field Practice Reports, continued)

B. Submission of Field Practice Reports

1. To the Faculty Advisor:
 - a. Listing of Field Practice Objectives developed during first week of field involvement (also enclose specific mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number). Note: All reports must be word processed.
 - b. Brief summation of activities for weeks 1, 2, and 3. (Format of weekly reports provided by "Field Experience Checklist.")
 - c. Brief summation of activities for weeks 4 and 5; plus evaluation of progress toward objectives.
 - d. Brief summation of activities for weeks 6 and 7.
 - e. Brief summation of activities for weeks 8 and 9; plus evaluation of progress toward objectives. (Part-time public health interns should file reports every three weeks).
 - f. Final Field Report: Submission date for final field report shall be by arrangement with the faculty advisor. This report should be an organized compilation of project exhibits with which the public health intern had major or active input and should include copies of any formal reports completed. Also, 8-10 pages of original narrative should provide a brief description of the organization, and student perceptions of the internship in relation to past work experience, academic exposures and career interests. (Note: Use binding other than notebook for final report.)
2. To the Field Preceptor
 - a. Copies of all "official" reports submitted to the faculty advisor (at the field preceptor's discretion).
 - b. Project reports requested by the field preceptor.