

170:299 The Practicum Experience**SYLLABUS****COURSE INFORMATION**

Course Number: 170:299
Official Title: The Practicum Experience
Transcript Title: Practicum Experience
Credit: 3 semester hours
Course Description: A comprehensive and integrated application of the curriculum required by the MPH program which allows students to demonstrate professional competency in public health practice in a practice setting.
Course Schedule: This course is offered during fall and spring semesters, and during the summer session.
Course Website: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum>
Course Email: Please direct emails to mph-practicum@uiowa.edu. This email box is monitored Monday through Friday. You may also contact course faculty individually though response times may be longer.

COURSE FACULTY**Course Director**

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Course Coordinator

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Field Experience Coordinator

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BACKGROUND

Collegiate accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) requires that MPH students complete a "planned, supervised, and evaluated practice experience."¹ The University of Iowa College of Public Health MPH program meets this requirement with the capstone course called The Practicum Experience.¹

The Practicum Experience provides each student an opportunity to work in an organization that addresses public health issues. During this experience, students are expected to apply public health

principles and theory learned in didactic courses, and to demonstrate the public health competencies as they carry out their assigned responsibilities. This experience, designed to allow students to synthesize and integrate core public health knowledge and skills in a professional practice setting, is the culminating or capstone course for the MPH Program. The practicum enables students to bridge the gap between the classroom and public health practice.

PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES

Students must:

- have completed at least five of the six MPH core courses in order to register for 170:299
- register simultaneously for the remaining core course
- have proposal approved by the course faculty before starting practicum

OBJECTIVES – Each student will:

- Develop a proposal that is mutually acceptable to the student, the preceptor and the course faculty.
- Demonstrate skills and knowledge from didactic coursework in a public health practice setting.
- Describe the relationship of the project(s) to the organization's mission, vision and programs.
- Apply the public health competencies in carrying out the practicum project(s).
- Exhibit professionalism in all work situations (e.g., behavior, dress, oral and written communication, ethics).
- Describe and evaluate the practicum experience in a written paper and an oral or poster presentation.

REQUIRED STEPS OF THE PRACTICUM PROCESS

- #1 Attend the MPH Seminar titled "Preparing for the Practicum" or view the web cast, "Preparing for the Practicum", at:
- #2 Meet in person or by phone with a Practicum Experience faculty member to discuss development of the Practicum Proposal and project timelines after attending the seminar or viewing the video.
- #3 Complete Practicum Proposal Form and obtain all required signatures before registration.
PROPOSAL FORM MUST BE APPROVED BY THE PRECEPTOR AND COURSE FACULTY BEFORE BEGINNING THE PRACTICUM PROJECT. If the student does not register the following semester after proposal approval, the proposal will need to be resubmitted.

Student will be cleared for registration when the above three requirements have been satisfied. Student may begin work on the project *before* registration, *if* the proposal has been approved.

- #4 Attend a one-time class, in person or via computer conference, to discuss and share information about the individual Practicums. The focus will be on PH Competencies as they are being used in the Practicum.
- #5 Complete a 200-contact hour practicum applying knowledge and skills from MPH coursework and demonstrating achievement in the public health core competencies.*
- #6 Submit the written paper reviewing Practicum activities and discussing public health competencies **ten days** before the Poster Session. If doing an oral presentation, submit the paper electronically to the Faculty Review Committee. If participating in the Poster Session,

submit the paper electronically to: mph-practicum@uiowa.edu. Sample papers may be found on ICON, titled: "170:299:001 MPH Practicum Experience"

- #7 Give an oral or a poster presentation (poster option available fall and spring semesters only) of the Practicum project/experience (details below under Presentation Instructions/Guidelines). Oral presentations must be completed by the end of finals week to receive credit for that semester. The Poster Session is on an announced day near the end of each semester.

* <http://ssph.fiu.edu/docs/DomainsandCompetenciesOnly.pdf>

SELECTING A PROJECT

Students should identify an interest area or focus for their Practicum and meet with Practicum faculty for assistance in identifying and facilitating Practicum selection. Also, each semester MPH students are invited to a colloquium where available Practicum opportunities with several Iowa organizations are presented. Details about the colloquium will be emailed to MPH students and will be available on the course website. Practicum opportunities are also linked from Job Connection to: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/iphp/practice/InternshipOpportunities.html>, ICON and the MPH website: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/iphp/practice/practicum/documents/practicumandinternshipsites.pdf>

EVALUATING THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE COURSE

Students and Preceptors are asked to complete a post-Practicum evaluation. Student is responsible for distributing the evaluation forms to his/her and Preceptor for return to course faculty. Forms may be found at: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum/forms.html>

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

The Practicum Experience will be graded as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" by the Course Director based on feedback from the Preceptor, Faculty and presentation/poster reviewers. Factors included in the determination are the quality of the written report, the oral or poster presentation and the Practicum work.

PROPOSAL AND WRITTEN REPORT GUIDELINES

PROPOSAL MUST BE SIGNED BY PRECEPTOR AND THE COURSE DIRECTOR or A COURSE FACULTY MEMBER BEFORE BEGINNING SITE-WORK ON THE PROJECT.**

Proposal contents include

- A completed Proposal Form
found at: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum/documents/Proposalform.pdf>

A one-two page proposal with the following information:

- Stated purpose or goal(s) of the Practicum, consistent with student's academic concentration
- Description of planned objectives and activities to meet the goal(s)
- Description of which Public Health Competencies* likely to be used through the Practicum. At least two discipline-specific and four cross-cutting competencies should be addressed
- General timeframe in which Practicum will be carried out

* <http://ssph.fiu.edu/docs/DomainsandCompetenciesOnly.pdf>

** Signature may be electronic or by an email letter if preceptor isn't local.

WRITTEN REPORT GUIDELINES

The written report should be 20-30 pages in length, excluding appendices, be double-spaced using 12-point type, and paginated. Write it with a non-expert audience in mind. This paper may be written in the first person (using "I") since it is a discussion of a personal experience. Grading is based on student meeting each of the elements below.

- **Abstract:** Summary or overview of the key points of the Practicum. (no more than ½ page in length)
- **Introduction:** Background of project including a definition of the public health issue being addressed, its significance and how it fits with the purpose/mission of the organization. Describe the organization overseeing the project(s), its purpose and/or mission statement, and funding sources (approx. 2-3 pages).
- **Discussion:** Describe your role in the project, including activities in which you were involved. Assess whether the proposal goals and objectives were appropriate in addressing the problem. Include discussion of barriers that were identified and how you addressed them (approx. 10-15 pages).
- **Personal Assessment:** Describe how this Practicum has contributed to an understanding of public health practice. Identify which of the Public Health Competencies* was applied during the MPH Practicum. Include at least two of the discipline-specific and four of the cross-cutting competencies (approximately 3-4 pages).
- **Conclusions and Recommendations:** Anticipated or suggested further action on the project resulting from project work and outcomes (approx. 3-4 pages).
- **References and Bibliography:** Use a standard manuscript style, such as the APA or AMA guidelines.

Note: Appendices may be added to the report but will not count towards the 20-30 page length requirement. All materials developed by the student as a part of the Practicum should be included in the appendices.

Written Report Due Date:

The written report is due **ten days** prior to the oral presentation date or the poster session.

For the oral presentation option, submit the written report electronically to each member of the Faculty Review Committee.

Attach the Written Report Evaluation form to the paper when submitting it: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum/documents/WrittenReportEvaluation.pdf>

For the poster presentation option (available fall & spring semesters), submit the written report electronically to mph-practicum@uiowa.edu

* <http://ssph.fiu.edu/docs/DomainsandCompetenciesOnly.pdf>

PRESENTATION INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Alternative 1.) POSTER PRESENTATION (poster option available fall and spring semesters only)

The poster presentation allows students a format that may better accommodate their area of study and future practice. Students are required to be at their posters during the two-hour long poster session to answer questions from the Poster Review Committee as well as from other faculty, staff and students. Specific guidelines for poster preparation will be distributed to all participating students. A Poster Review Committee member will evaluate each poster. The Poster Session is open to faculty, students and staff, as well as the public.

Alternative 2.) ORAL PRESENTATION

The oral presentation demonstrates the student's ability to prepare and give a professional report of his/her practicum to an informed audience. Students should use PowerPoint to facilitate the presentation. The presentation should be 30-40 minutes long with additional time for questions. Faculty will evaluate the presentation among themselves before sharing the status of completion with the student. Schedule ninety (90) minutes for the process.

Three Faculty Members are required to comprise a Presentation Committee to serve as evaluators:

- One faculty member from student's discipline/focus area
- One faculty member from a department outside of student's discipline/focus area
- One faculty member from Practicum Course (170:299)—Mary Aquilino, Laurie Walkner or Pam Willard)

The student selects the faculty and requests their participation in the Presentation Committee

and arranges a mutually convenient date, time and location for the presentation. Laurie Walkner or Pam Willard will assist with conference room arrangements as needed. Students are encouraged to identify Faculty Review Committee members early in the Practicum. The presentation is open to all interested faculty, students and staff and the public. The Preceptor is encouraged to attend. The presentation must be completed by the last day of final exam week if credit for that semester is sought.

PRACTICUM FORMS

Proposal Form: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum/documents/Proposalform.pdf>

Student Evaluation of Practicum:

<http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum/documents/StudentEvaluation.pdf>

Preceptor Evaluation of Student:

<http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum/documents/Preceptorevaluationofstudent.pdf>

Written Report Evaluation:

<http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum/documents/WrittenReportEvaluation.pdf>

Oral Presentation: Faculty Review Committee Worksheet: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum/documents/OralPresentationFacultyReviewCommitteeWorksheet.pdf>

Poster Presentation Evaluation Form:

<http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/about/practicum/documents/PosterPresentationEvaluation.pdf>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ROLE CLARIFICATION

The **Course Faculty** for the Practicum (170:299) include: the Course Director, the Course Coordinator and the Field Practice Coordinator. Course Faculty are available to help students identify Practicum opportunities and assist in the development and implementation of successful projects. Practicum grade is determined by the Course Director. Students may also seek guidance from other faculty members for selecting potential Practicum sites and should inform the Faculty advisor of the project being undertaken.

The **Preceptor** is the practice liaison with the student, representing the organization or agency where the Practicum is carried out. S/he collaborates with student in developing the proposal, and orients student to all aspects of the project and practice site. S/he provides guidance to, and regular oversight of, the student in carrying out the Practicum. The Preceptor is expected to provide feedback to the Course Director on student performance.

The **Faculty Advisor** is student's assigned departmental advisor. S/he should be apprised of Practicum plan to be sure it meets all departmental expectations.

Other faculty may serve on practicum committees and/or assist students to identify Practicum opportunities.

HUMAN SUBJECTS/IRB

Please consult the Course Faculty before beginning the project if the project is research-based, thus may require approval from the Human Subjects Office. Consult the Human Subjects office website, <http://research.uiowa.edu/hso/>, for more information about Human Subjects Research and the Institutional Review Board process. Agencies might also require additional human subject approval. However, most Practicum projects are practice-based rather than research and do not require IRB involvement.

PROFESSIONALISM IN THE PRACTICUM WORKPLACE

Students are expected to act as professional employees, learning and adhering to behavior and dress standards appropriate to the organization.

ORGANIZATION/PROJECT SITE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to comply with all rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the organization and project site during the practicum.

HEALTH AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Students will meet the requirements of the practicum agency/organization regarding background checks, health and safety requirements.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act is requested to notify the course faculty as early as possible to make appropriate arrangements.

POLICY ON STUDENT ACADEMIC CONDUCT STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

Standards of Academic Conduct

The faculty of the College of Public Health expects the conduct of a student registered or taking courses in the College to be consistent with that of a professional person. Courtesy, honesty, and respect should be shown by students toward faculty, guest lecturers, administrative support staff, and fellow students. Similarly, students should expect faculty to treat them fairly, showing respect for their ideas and opinions and striving to help them achieve maximum benefits from their experience in the School.

Student academic misconduct includes behavior involving plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, falsification of records or official documents, intentional misuse of equipment or materials, and aiding and abetting the perpetration of such acts. The preparation of reports, papers, and examinations, assigned on an individual basis, must represent each student's own effort. Reference sources and citations should be indicated clearly and adequate attribution given. The use of assistance from other students or aids of any kind during a written examination, except when the use of books or notes has been approved by an instructor, is a violation of the standard of academic conduct.

Useful discussions on plagiarism and how to avoid it can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>

<http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html>

Procedure for Handling Alleged Violations of Standards of Academic Conduct

Questions of academic dishonesty arising within the College are treated on an individual basis. In the Graduate College, the questions are handled at the departmental level. If the departmental decision is appealed, the Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs may appoint an appeals committee of faculty and students from a slate of nominees prepared by the Graduate Council and the Graduate Student Senate to recommend an appropriate course of action. Students in professional graduate colleges should inquire at the office of their respective dean for further information. If the student disagrees with the decision made by the Dean, the student may request a review by the Provost.

¹ Council on Education for Public Health. (Amended 2005) *Accreditation Criteria: Public Health Programs*. Retrieved August 20, 2007, from <http://www.ceph.org/files/public/PHP-Criteria-2005.S05.pdf>.