

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 that allows students to demonstrate professional competency in public health in a practice setting.
 Course Schedule: This course is offered during fall and spring semesters, and during the summer session.
 Course Websites: MPH Practicum @ <http://cph.uiowa.edu/mph/practicum/about.html>
 ICON @ <https://icon.uiowa.edu/index.shtml>
 Course Email: Please direct emails to mph-practicum@uiowa.edu [This e-mail box is monitored Monday through Friday] or contact pamela-willard@uiowa.edu or laurie-walkner@uiowa.edu individually, though response times may be longer.
 Useful reminders:
 1. E-mail correspondence to registered students will be sent to the "@uiowa.edu" address, so be certain that you check that email regularly or have messages forwarded to your preferred address.
 2. Deadlines and other important information needed for a given semester will be posted on the 107:299 "0.0 ongoing" ICON site and also on the MPH webpage: <http://cph.uiowa.edu/mph/practicum/dates.html>

COURSE FACULTY**Course Director**

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BACKGROUND

The Practicum Experience provides students the opportunity to work in an organization that addresses public health issues. During the practicum, students apply public health principles and theories learned in didactic courses and demonstrate the ASPH public health competencies to 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. 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

PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES

Students must:

- have completed all required MPH core courses and the majority of other MPH coursework in order to register for 170:299
- have their 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 practicum 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 ASPH designated MPH 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).
- Submit a paper and do a poster* presentation that describes and evaluates the practicum project as a culminating experience requiring synthesis and application of public health. *Distance-based students may do an oral presentation using a virtual conferencing medium).

REQUIRED STEPS OF THE PRACTICUM PROCESS

Before beginning the practicum, the student must:

- #1 Attend the MPH Seminar titled, *Preparing for the Practicum*. (Students in **distance-based programs** may view the webcast *Preparing for the Practicum* http://ph-streaming.public-health.uiowa.edu/DOWNLOAD/MPH_Seminar/Fall2011/20111108/20111108MPH_Willard_ref.mov)
- #2 Review the Practicum syllabus @ <http://cph.uiowa.edu/mph/practicum/documents/PracticumSyllabus.pdf>
- #3 Prior to preparing the proposal, meet with a Practicum Experience course faculty (in-person or by phone) to discuss development of the practicum proposal and project timelines, after attending the seminar or viewing the video and reviewing the syllabus.
- #4 Log onto the course on ICON: <http://icon.uiowa.edu> to verify your login capability and view

examples of practicum proposals from previous students.

- #5 Complete the Practicum Proposal and Proposal Form and obtain all required signatures before registration. ***Registration must be completed prior to the semester start if it will be completed during that semester. **The PRECEPTOR AND COURSE FACULTY MUST APPROVE THE PRACTICUM PROPOSAL AND SIGN THE PROPOSAL FORM BEFORE THE STUDENT CAN BEGIN A PRACTICUM PROJECT.**
- #6 Submit an application and receive human subjects' office approval (IRB) if needed.
- #7 Inform your academic advisor of your practicum plan.

Students will be cleared for registration when the above six steps have been completed.

During the practicum, the student must:

- #8 Log onto the course on ICON and check the site at least weekly for any updates.
- #9 Participate in an ICON discussion group during the semester of practicum registration. The focus will be on selected PH Competencies and how they are being used in the practicum. Readings will be required as a basis for the discussion.
- #10 Complete at least 200-contact hours in a public health practice setting applying knowledge and skills from MPH coursework and demonstrating achievement in the public health competencies.

ASPH competencies can be found @ <http://ssph.fiu.edu/docs/DomainsandCompetenciesOnly.pdf>

Following completion of the practice experience, the student must:

- #11 Electronically submit [to: mph-practicum@uiowa.edu] the written paper reviewing practicum activities and discussing the public health competencies at least **ten days** before the scheduled poster session (generally held the last week of classes each semester).

If you are a **distance-based student** doing an oral presentation, submit the paper electronically to all members of the Faculty Review Committee at least ten days prior to the presentation.

Sample papers may be found on ICON, titled: "170:299:001 MPH Practicum Experience", under NEWS.

- #12 Participate in the poster session describing the practicum project/experience (see details below under Presentation Instructions/Guidelines).

For **distance-based students** there is an oral presentation option via video conferencing. Students must identify faculty to evaluate the presentation (see Presentation Instructions and Guidelines). Students should contact faculty early in the process to assure availability.

- #13 Invite your preceptor to the presentation.
- #14 Submit completed Preceptor Evaluation of Student and Student Evaluation of Course forms.

Preceptor Evaluation of Student form must be submitted to course faculty before a final grade is assigned.

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. In addition, 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 e-mailed to MPH students and will be available on the course website. Practicum opportunities are also posted @ <http://cph.uiowa.edu/iphp/practice/InternshipOpportunities.html>

EVALUATING THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE COURSE

Students and practicum site Preceptors are asked to complete a post-practicum evaluation. The student is responsible for distributing the evaluation forms to his/her Preceptor and for returning the completed forms to course faculty. The preceptor evaluation of student must be submitted to course faculty before a final grade is assigned.

Evaluation forms can be found @ <http://cph.uiowa.edu/mp/practicum/forms.html>

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

The Practicum Experience is graded as *satisfactory* or *unsatisfactory* by the Course Director based on feedback from the Preceptor, course 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 THE PRECEPTOR AND A COURSE FACULTY MEMBER BEFORE BEGINNING THE PROJECT.**

Proposal contents include:

- A completed Proposal Form that can be found @ <http://cph.uiowa.edu/mp/practicum/documents/Proposalform.pdf>
- A two-three page proposal with the following information:
 - Site name and preceptor name, title and credentials; name and location of organization under which practicum will be carried out.
 - Statement describing the public health problem to be addressed.
 - 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). We recommend following the "**SMART**" guidelines in writing objectives. These are:
 - a. Specific** – A specific objective has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general one (e.g. A general objective would be "Increase immunization rates." A specific objective would be "My project will increase immunization rates in Iowa by 5% by August 2010"). Be as specific as possible within the constraints of your project.
 - b. Measurable**– Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each objective. Ask yourself "How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?" In the objective above, the 5 percent and the August deadline is what makes it measurable.
 - c. Attainable**– Objectives should be achievable given the resources and time available. If not, they should have concrete suggestions for follow-up by future students or staff.
 - d. Realistic**– Objectives are realistic when the skills needed to reach the objective are available and the goal fits with the overall strategy and goals of the organization.
 - e. Timely**- When setting objectives, identify a begin date, end date, and how much time it may take to reach the objective within the timeframe. The objectives should

aim to shape and encourage your professional development and provide an opportunity for applied practice in the particular area(s) of public health.

- Description of which Public Health Domains* are likely to be important to the success of the Practicum project(s), including expectations of how they will be a part of the practicum project. At least two discipline-specific domains and four crosscutting domains should be described. Within each domain, identify the individual competencies likely to be used. For example, one or more of the competencies listed under the Domains of 1.Epidemiology and 2.Social and Behavioral Sciences may be addressed as discipline-specific ones; for the cross-cutting domains, selected competencies should similarly be discussed.
- A general timeframe in which Practicum will be carried out

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

** Signature may be electronic or by e-mail letter if preceptor isn't local.

WRITTEN REPORT GUIDELINES

The written report should be 20-30 pages in length, excluding appendices, 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). This is a personal discussion of the project from your viewpoint, not a research paper. It is acceptable to write in the first person (using "I").
- **Personal Assessment:** Describe how this practicum has contributed to an understanding of public health practice. Identify which of the Public Health Competencies* were applied during the MPH Practicum. Include at least two of the discipline-specific and four of the crosscutting 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 poster session or the oral presentation date.

For the poster presentation, submit the written report electronically to mph-practicum@uiowa.edu

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

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

PRESENTATION INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

1) POSTER PRESENTATION The Poster Session allows students to demonstrate their ability to synthesize the Practicum Experience and present it in visual form to the audience. For all campus-based students the Poster Session is the required presentation. Students should 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. A Poster Review Committee member will evaluate posters. Posters will be presented during the last week of classes for each semester and the summer session. The link below describes poster expectations and development.

<http://cph.uiowa.edu/mph/practicum/documents/PosterPresentationGuidelines.pdf>

2) ORAL PRESENTATION for DISTANCE-BASED STUDENTS The oral presentation demonstrates the student's ability to prepare and give a professional report of his/her practicum to an informed audience. This report should generally follow the format of the written report. 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. The presentation will be done via video conferencing during the last week of classes for each semester and the summer session. The Presentation Committee will evaluate the presentation. The members are: Mary Aquilino, Laurie Walkner, and Pamela Willard

ORAL PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

The Oral Presentation should generally follow the written report format, thus should include the following elements. Use of photographs and other graphic representations is strongly encouraged.

- **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).
- **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.
- **Personal Assessment:** Describe how this Practicum has contributed to an understanding of public health practice. Identify which of the Public Health Competencies were applied during the MPH Practicum. Include at least two of the discipline-specific and four of the crosscutting competencies.
- **Conclusions and Recommendations:** Anticipated or suggested further action on the project resulting from project work and outcomes.

The presentation itself should be about 30-40 minutes long, allowing 10-15 minutes for questions and discussion.

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PRACTICUM FORMS

Proposal Form:

<http://cph.uiowa.edu/mph/practicum/documents/Proposalform.pdf>

Student Evaluation of Course:

<http://cph.uiowa.edu/mph/practicum/documents/StudentEvaluation.pdf>

Preceptor Evaluation of Student:

<http://cph.uiowa.edu/mph/practicum/documents/Preceptorevaluationofstudent.pdf>

Written Report Evaluation:

<http://cph.uiowa.edu/mph/practicum/documents/WrittenReportEvaluation.pdf>

Poster Presentation Evaluation:

<http://cph.uiowa.edu/mph/practicum/documents/PosterPresentationEvaluation.pdf>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ROLE CLARIFICATION

The **Course Faculty** for the Practicum Experience (170:299) includes the Course Director, the Course Coordinator and the Field Practice Coordinator. Course Faculty members are available to help students identify practicum opportunities and assist in the development and implementation of successful projects. The Course Director determines practicum grade. Students may also seek guidance from other faculty members for selecting potential practicum sites.

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 the student's assigned departmental academic advisor. It is a courtesy to apprise the faculty advisor of practicum plan.

HUMAN SUBJECTS/IRB

Please consult the Course Faculty before beginning the project if the project is research-based or involves data collection, and 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. Ask your preceptor about expectations before you begin your practicum.

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 website:

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