



# Student Practicum Manual

## Academic Year 2013-2014



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## **Introduction to the Practicum**

The *Student Practicum Manual* is intended to guide the North Dakota Master of Public Health (ND MPH) degree candidates in selecting and completing the Practicum, which is an essential educational component of the program. The Practicum is a planned, supervised practical experience, strategically designed to provide an opportunity to support and apply academic knowledge and acquired skills to a specific public health project. In short, the Practicum is a hands-on experience in the field of public health that provides opportunities to apply and test public health concepts and theories in practical settings and improve learning related to the MPH program's public health competencies. The Practicum is also designed to benefit the Practicum Organization, for example, by providing assistance with current project delivery, evaluation, or data analysis.

The Practicum accounts for 3 academic credits in the ND MPH program. Concepts and competencies learned from MPH coursework are integrated through a minimum 240-hour Practicum experience. The Practicum is conducted in partnership with an agency or organization (hereafter "the Practicum Organization") that provides a public health service, in the broad sense of public health. The Practicum Organization may be a public health department, another government agency such as the Indian Health Service, or a non-governmental organization such as a hospital, other health care provider, or a community service organization. A Practicum Team assists the student to define, plan, and implement the Practicum. The team consists of a Preceptor, who works in the Practicum Organization the student's Academic Advisor, and the MPH Program Coordinator, who oversees the Practicum process and ensures that all requirements of the Practicum are met. All team members must approve the Practicum before work begins.

The overall objectives for the student during the Practicum experience are to:

- Apply competencies, knowledge, techniques and tools acquired in the classroom;
- Gain practical experience in a public health and/or community health setting;
- Develop skills in the field of study;
- Learn the inner workings of a public health organization; and
- Explore a potential career choice.

Ethical and professional conduct is essential to the Practicum experience. As an individual training to be a public health professional, each ND MPH student is expected to conduct him or herself ethically and professionally according to the standards of the ND MPH program, North Dakota State University, and the Practicum Organization.

## **Public Health Competencies & the Practicum**

The curriculum for the MPH degree is competency-based to comply with current efforts to improve the quality, relevance, and accountability of graduate public health education. The Practicum is designed to extend and expand ND MPH students' competency experiences. The Practicum must include an experience that will enhance a majority of the MPH program's core public health competencies. These are:

- *Biostatistics Competency*: Develop statistical reasoning; and apply statistical methods in addressing, analyzing, and solving problems related to public health.

- *Health Policy and Management Competency:* Understand the organization, cost, financing, quality, and equity of the health care delivery system; the role of the health care delivery system in maintaining the health of populations; and current health management and policy issues.
- *Epidemiology Competency:* Understand patterns of disease and injury in human populations; how this knowledge is derived; and how this knowledge is used to control health problems in populations.
- *Environmental and Occupational Health Competency:* Understand the environmental and occupational factors including biological, physical and chemical factors that affect the health of a communities and workers.
- *Social and Behavioral Science Competency:* Understand the behavioral, social, and cultural factors related to individual and population health and health disparities over the life course; and how this knowledge is used to improve population health.

### **The Practicum Process**

For students, the Practicum process consists of the following:

1. Identifying a Practicum Organization and Preceptor
2. Identifying a Practicum project of mutual benefit to the student and Practicum Organization;
3. Writing a Practicum Proposal that describes the Practicum and obtaining approval from the Practicum Team;
4. Completing all requirements to begin the Practicum and enrolling for the required credits;
5. Implementing the Practicum as outlined in the Practicum Proposal; and
6. Providing all required documents to receive credit for the experience and to be graded on the experience.

Each of these steps is discussed below and can be found in the Appendix.

- *Required prior to enrollment in the Practicum:*
  - Identify a Practicum Organization, Preceptor, & draft a Proposal
- *Required at the conclusion of the Practicum experience to obtain credit:*
  - Practicum Logbook
  - Mid-term and Final Preceptor's Evaluation
  - Mid-term and Final Student's Evaluation
  - Final product/report presented to the Academic Advisor and Program Coordinator

### **Selecting a Practicum Organization & Preceptor**

The Practicum is a practical public health experience that benefits the Preceptor's organization, as well as furthers the student's learning and professional goals. The Practicum should be completed when the student has finished or is very close to completing the MPH core courses. The Practicum can be completed at any time during the academic year, although summer tends to be most convenient. The Practicum can take many forms including:

- Research project, or part of a research project
- Community health intervention, or part of one
- Public policy analysis or part of one
- Other project that relates to the planning, implementing, managing, or evaluating of a public health service, program, or initiative.

Sometime during their first year in the MPH program, each student should meet with the MPH Program Coordinator, their Faculty Advisor, and/or the MPH Program Director to discuss and/or get ideas for the Practicum. The meeting consists of discussion, brainstorming, and problem solving to ensure that the student understands the basic requirements of the Practicum, and to flush out ideas as to where the student might like to complete their Practicum experience.

Following this meeting, the student must identify a Practicum Organization and Preceptor within that organization, in addition to developing their Practicum Proposal. The Practicum Team approves the Practicum Proposal before work begins.

#### *Practicums in the Place of Employment*

Students are able to use their place of employment as the Practicum Organization if the following conditions are met:

- Practicum project is unique and separate from the student's employment responsibilities
- Practicum Preceptor is not the student's usual supervisor

#### **Writing the Practicum Proposal**

Developing a Practicum Proposal (Appendix A), ensures that there is a well-defined project with clear goals and an identified 'product' that signals completion of the student's obligation. The Practicum Proposal must be approved by the student's Practicum Team. The student is ready to proceed to the next step once the Practicum Team has approved the Practicum Proposal. The Practicum Proposal must contain all of the following elements in this order:

##### **A. Background**

- a. Practicum Organization and Its Public Health Mission  
Describe the public health service(s) that the Practicum Organization provides
- b. Preceptor's Role in Practicum Organization  
Describe the Preceptor's role in providing the public health service(s) of the Practicum Organization

##### **B. Project Description**

- a. Brief Summary of the project
- b. Goals & Objectives (in bullet form)
  - i. The Practicum Proposal should state the goal(s) for the Practicum and the associated objectives. The goal(s) and objectives will be the basis for evaluating the student's performance during the Practicum.
  - ii. Include "product(s)" or "deliverable(s)" as one of the Practicum's goals
- c. Practicum's Contribution & Importance to Practicum Organization

##### **C. Contributions to MPH Learning**

- a. Relationship to Mission of ND MPH and Student's Specialization
- b. Core Competencies Addressed by the Practicum

##### **D. Timeline**

Create a timeline that shows the time allotted to each goal and objective

## Enrolling in the Practicum

Once the Practicum Team has approved the Practicum Proposal, the signed copy must be given to the MPH Program Coordinator. The MPH Program Coordinator then gives the student permission to enroll. Students may register for 1 to 3 credits per semester, repeated up to 3 times as needed to obtain a total of 3 credits. MPH 794 requires a permission number to enter in Campus Connection for successful enrollment.

Please note that before given permission to enroll, students also need to have completed:

- All MPH core courses (or be in the last semester of core courses) and be in good academic standing
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) training in Human Subjects Protection
- Any requirements of the Practicum Organization such as immunizations or Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) training
- A criminal background check

### *Training in Human Subjects Protection*

NDSU uses the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course, an online training program. ND MPH students are required to complete the course for Social/Behavioral Researchers. **Training must be completed at least 1 month before registering for the Practicum hours.** Instructions for completing Human Subjects Protection training are found on the Institutional Review Board website:

[http://www.ndsu.edu/research/institutional\\_review\\_board/training.html](http://www.ndsu.edu/research/institutional_review_board/training.html)

### *Criminal Background Check*

A certified background check is required within 30 days prior to enrolling in the Practicum. The MPH Program Coordinator will provide instructions and program code when the student is ready to enroll. Cost is paid by the student.

[www.certifiedbackground.com](http://www.certifiedbackground.com)

## Completing the Practicum

The student must meet regularly with the Preceptor to review progress, gain input and advice, solve problems that have arisen, and ensure that the student is meeting the goals of the Practicum. A formal mid-practicum review must also be conducted between the student and Preceptor and shared with the student's advisor. This can be completed in the manner most conducive to the Preceptor and student and it is required that the electronic mid-evaluation be used as a minimum. All students must maintain a Practicum Logbook (Appendix B) in order to document that they have fulfilled the 240-hour requirement of the Practicum. When the Preceptor is satisfied that the Practicum is complete (that is, has met the goals and objectives of the Practicum), he or she completes the electronic Preceptor's Evaluation and it is sent to the MPH Program Coordinator. The student completes the electronic Student's Evaluation and provides the Practicum Logbook (Appendix B) and the final project or 'deliverable(s)' to the Academic Advisor and MPH Program Coordinator.

## **Evaluating the Practicum**

Once all documents and evaluations are provided, the Practicum can be evaluated. The Practicum is Pass/Fail based upon the Preceptor's evaluation of the student's performance in coordination with the Academic Advisor. The evaluation process will be coordinated with the Faculty Advisor and/or the MPH Program Coordinator. The Faculty advisor enters the Practicum Pass/Fail designation in to Campus Connection.

## **Specification of Responsibilities**

### **Practicum Organization**

- Provide a mentored, practical learning experience related to public health for the student.
- Provide a qualified person (employee or affiliate) to mentor the student (the Preceptor).
- Certify that it has in place policies that protect ND MPH students and employees from sexual harassment and discrimination while they are onsite during the Practicum. Practicum Organization agrees to provide the University with copies of its non-discrimination and sexual harassment policies.
- Provide a name badge, as necessary.
- Provide an orientation to each ND MPH student at the beginning of the experience, which includes an overview of site's mission and goals and physical facilities, personnel and other operational systems needed for the student to function appropriately at the site.

### **ND MPH Program**

- Ensure that the student has completed sufficient coursework to conduct the proposed Practicum.
- Complete a background check of the student within 30 days prior to approving the student for the proposed Practicum.
- Ensure that the student has completed IRB and CITI training before undertaking the proposed Practicum.
- Ensure that the student meets all policy requirements of the College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Sciences
- Notify the Practicum Organization if at any time a student files a grievance in which the Practicum Organization is a party.

### **Preceptor**

- Guide development of the Practicum Proposal and approve its final form (Appendix A) with signature.
- Supervise the student during the conduct of the Practicum and communicate to the student any deficiencies of performance and provide the student with an opportunity to correct any deficient areas prior to the completion of the experience; complete in-person mid-review with student; if there are deficiencies, coordinate an improvement plan with the Academic Advisor.
- Communicate progress and coordinate grading with the Faculty Advisor.
- Sign the student's Practicum Logbook (Appendix B), which records hours worked and tasks performed.
- Complete an electronic evaluation of the student's work on the Practicum.

- Treat as confidential student educational records, which are subject to the Federal Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA).

### **MPH Program Coordinator**

- Provide the student with a copy of the Practicum Manual and all required Practicum Forms.
- Meet with the student to describe the Practicum and brainstorm possible Practicum projects.
- Provide a list of possible Practicum Organizations with contact persons for which the ND MPH program has Memorandums of Understanding to serve as a Practicum Organization.
- Provide information on the IRB process, if necessary for a Practicum.
- Review the Practicum Proposal (Appendix A) to ensure that it meets the criteria to go forward and approve with signatures.
- Intercede on the student's behalf if necessary to clarify student and Preceptor roles and facilitate understanding and agreement as to goals, conduct, commitment, and deliverables.
- Provide permission for student to register for the Practicum
- Collect and review for completion the Practicum Proposal (Appendix A) and the deliverable(s) in addition to the Academic Advisor.
- Ensure that the student receives a grade for the Practicum.

### **ND MPH Student**

- Develop a Practicum Proposal that describes the project – its purpose, rationale, goals, timeline, and products – and obtain approval of the Practicum Proposal (Appendix A) from the Practicum Team.
- Meet regularly with the Preceptor during the course of conducting the Practicum.
- Comply with the policies, procedures, and operational standards of the Practicum Organization.
- Behave professionally at all times including attention to punctuality and meeting deadlines.
- Provide the Practicum's final project to the Preceptor, MPH Program Coordinator, and Academic Advisor at completion.
- Complete all paperwork and evaluations required for the Practicum
- Comply with the Practicum Organization's privacy rules and policies related thereto and sign any necessary confidentiality agreements.

### **Professionalism and Ethics**

Students must consistently demonstrate the core attributes of professionalism. NDSU College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Sciences has defined the following behaviors as indicators of professionalism:

- Commitment to Excellence
- Honesty and Integrity
- Respect for Others
- Empathy and Compassion
- Professional Responsibility
- Social Responsibility
- Altruism



Students must possess the emotional health necessary for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of sound judgment, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with members of the academic program and community. They must have a high level of compassion for others, motivation to serve, integrity, and a consciousness of social values and possess sufficient interpersonal skills to interact positively with people from all levels of society, all ethnic backgrounds, and all belief systems. Academic dishonesty and professional misconduct are considered unacceptable. If there is doubt about whether or not academic or professional conduct is appropriate, students should query the guidance provided in university and ND MPH bulletins. This is available at:

NDSU College of Pharmacy policy manual, Section 3.01:

[http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/pharmacy/documents/Policy\\_Manual\\_3-26-12.pdf](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/pharmacy/documents/Policy_Manual_3-26-12.pdf)

## **Appendices**

The following must be completed for the Practicum and submitted to the MPH Program Coordinator:

- *Appendix A: Practicum Organization, Preceptor, & Proposal Form*
  - To be completed and approved and then submitted by the student to the MPH Program Coordinator before the student is allowed to register for MPH 794 Practicum
- *Appendix B: Practicum Logbook*
  - To be completed and submitted by the student to the MPH Program Coordinator and Academic Advisor with the Practicum deliverable(s), in order to receive a grade for MPH 794
- *Appendix C: Preceptor's Evaluation questions*
  - To be completed and submitted electronically by the Preceptor in order to assist the Academic Advisor in providing a grade for MPH 794 Practicum
- *Appendix D: Student's Evaluation questions*
  - To be completed and submitted electronically by the student in order to receive a grade for MPH 794 Practicum

The Proposal Form must be typed. If you have any questions about the Practicum's purpose and process, please contact the MPH Program Coordinator:

Stefanie Meyer  
MPH Program Coordinator, NDSU  
College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Sciences  
Department 2660, PO Box 6050  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050  
Tel: 701-231-6549  
Fax: 701-231-7606

## **APPENDIX A: PRACTICUM ORGANIZATION, PRECEPTOR AND PROPOSAL FORM**

## PRACTICUM ORGANIZATION, PRECEPTOR, AND PROPOSAL FORM

	Student	Preceptor
Name		
Student ID #		
Email Address		
Daytime Telephone #		
Specialization		
Practicum Title:		

### Practicum Organization

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

[write proposal in this space – use as much as you need]

**Practicum Proposal Signatures:**

**Student:** I am committed to completing the Practicum project outlined in this Practicum Proposal, under the supervision of the Preceptor named above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Preceptor, Advisor, & MPH Program Coordinator:** I approve of this Practicum and agree to provide guidance to the student during its implementation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Preceptor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Advisor's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**MPH Program Coordinator's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## **APPENDIX B: PRACTICUM LOGBOOK**

[illegible]

**Note: Use as many sheets as necessary to log your hours.**

Date

## **APPENDIX C: PRECEPTOR'S EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

## PRECEPTOR'S EVALUATION QUESTIONS

*Thank you for your partnership! In order to continually improve and provide effective public health practicum experiences, it is important that the Master of Public Health (MPH) program receive preceptor feedback. This electronic form was created to help you with this evaluation process. A summary of the results of your responses will be created and shared with the MPH program Director, Coordinator, and Faculty Advisor. The program will use the summary information to ensure effective public health practical experiences and assist in determining an appropriate letter grade for the students' practicum experience. [e-mail message from NDSU]*

### MID-TERM REVIEW

#### 1. Please evaluate the student's Practicum performance on all of the following attributes:

Attribute	Poor	Average	Very Good	Outstanding	Inadequate Opportunity to Observe
Written communication skills					
Oral communication skills					
Demonstration of intellectual ability					
Motivation on this project					
Interpersonal skills					
Ability to work collaboratively with diverse communities and constituencies					
Standards of personal integrity; compassion, honesty, and respect for all people					
Judgment and independence displayed					

#### 2. Please rate the student's performance on achieving the goals and measurable objectives of the Practicum: (These will be added from the Practicum Proposal)

Practicum Goals & Objectives	Poor	Average	Very Good	Outstanding



### FINAL REVIEW

1. Please evaluate the student's Practicum performance on all of the following attributes:

Attribute	Poor	Average	Very Good	Outstanding	Inadequate Opportunity to Observe
Written communication skills					
Oral communication skills					
Demonstration of intellectual ability					
Motivation on this project					
Interpersonal skills					
Ability to work collaboratively with diverse communities and constituencies					
Standards of personal integrity; compassion, honesty, and respect for all people					
Judgment and independence displayed					

2. Please rate the student's performance on achieving the goals and measurable objectives of the Practicum

Practicum Goals & Objectives	Poor	Average	Very Good	Outstanding

3. Please rate the quality of the Practicum deliverable(s):

\_\_\_\_\_ Poor    \_\_\_\_\_Average    \_\_\_\_\_Very Good    \_\_\_\_\_Outstanding

**4. Was this experience helpful to your organization?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not Sure

**5. Would you consider serving as a Practicum Preceptor again?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not Sure

**6. Please provide any suggestions either for the student or for future Practicum experiences, in general.**

## **APPENDIX D: STUDENT'S EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

**STUDENT'S EVALATION QUESTIONS**

*In order to continually improve and provide effective public health practicum experiences, it is important that the Master of Public Health (MPH) program and site preceptors receive student feedback concerning the quality of both the preceptor and the practicum experience. This electronic form was created to help you with this evaluation process. A summary of the results of your responses will be created and shared with the MPH program Director, Coordinator, and Faculty Advisor. The program will use the summary information to ensure effective public health practical experiences. [e-mail message from NDSU]*

**MID-TERM REVIEW**

1. Overall, how would you rate your Practicum experience?

☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Very Good ☐ Outstanding

Please explain the reasons for your Practicum rating.

2. At this point, do you think this experience will be helpful to you in your career as a public health professional?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

3. To date, how would you rate the supervision of your Preceptor?

☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Very Good ☐ Outstanding

Please explain the reasons for your Preceptor rating.

4. Are you making progress on your Practicum goals?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

5. Comments:

### FINAL REVIEW

1. Overall, how would you rate your Practicum experience?

☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Very Good ☐ Outstanding

Please explain the reasons for your Practicum rating.

2. Do you think this experience will be helpful to you in your career as a public health professional?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

3. Do you think this experience was helpful to the Practicum Organization?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

4. How would you rate the supervision of your Preceptor?

☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Very Good ☐ Outstanding

Please explain the reasons for your Preceptor rating.

5. Do you think your Preceptor evaluated your Practicum accurately?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

6. Would you recommend this Practicum Organization to other MPH students?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

7. Would you recommend your Preceptor to other MPH students?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Comments: