Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) Practicum Guide

PH 9997 Practicum

A practicum, or applied practice experience, is an application of learning to a ‘real world’ setting. Students in the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) program are required to complete a practicum. Upon completion of the practicum, the student will be able to demonstrate a mastery of evidence-based public health decision-making and capacity to translate general and discipline-specific empirical knowledge into effective public health practice. Additionally, students demonstrate leadership, independence, and originality in a project with significant public health impact.

This guide provides an overview of the steps required to complete the practicum and helpful resources to ensure success.

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**Section 1: Practicum Overview**

The practicum is an applied field experience designed to demonstrate competency attainment, enhance skills, and benefit the community. The practicum process includes three major phases: (1) planning your practicum; (2) submitting a learning contract; and, (3) completing your practicum. This document provides a guide for each phase.

**Practicum Process**

- **Plan Your Practicum**
  - Review the requirements for a practicum
  - Explore practicum opportunities and project ideas
  - Select a practicum site, preceptor, and faculty mentor
  - Plan a project in conjunction with your preceptor and faculty mentor

- **Submit a Learning Contract**
  - Develop and submit your learning contract
  - Wait for your learning contract to be approved by your faculty mentor and the practicum office
  - Register for the practicum course
  - Complete any prerequisites and obtain any required approvals applicable to your project

- **Complete Your Practicum**
  - Communicate with your preceptor and faculty mentor throughout your project
  - Complete your final products and send copies to your faculty mentor
  - Your preceptor will complete a practicum evaluation
  - Complete the student evaluation

**Requirements Overview**

- Students must select a practicum site in a non-academic setting, unless the setting is externally facing or primarily focused on community engagement.
- Practicum experiences may take place at a student’s current place of employment as long as the experience is outside the scope of their current position (e.g., working with a different department, office, or team).
- Each practicum requires a preceptor (site supervisor) who oversees the experience at the host organization and a UTHealth School of Public Health faculty mentor to approve, oversee, and grade the practicum.
- DrPH students must select five (5) competencies. At least three (3) of these five competencies must be DrPH foundational competencies, one (1) of which must be from the leadership, management and governance domain (DrPH-4 through DrPH-13). Two (2) of the five competencies may be either major-specific competencies or additional DrPH foundational competencies.
- Prior to enrolling in the appropriate amount of credit hours with a faculty mentor, students must develop and receive approval of a learning contract.
- Additional approvals are required for international practicum opportunities.
- Final Products:
  - DrPH students must develop at least one (1) high-quality product that is meaningful for the organization and advances public health practice. See list of example products here.
  - DrPH students must complete a reflection that directly addresses DrPH Foundational Competency 11: Assess one’s own strengths, weaknesses, and leadership capacities. See the reflection template here.
- DrPH students must cumulatively earn three (3) PH 9997 Practicum credits to meet program requirements. Each academic credit requires 60 hours of experience, therefor students must obtain at least 180 hours of cumulative experience. Students may pursue more than one practicum or split enrollment over multiple semesters to achieve the required hours.
- UTHealth School of Public Health does not require timesheets.
- Additional considerations for:
  - International students
  - International practicum experiences
  - Practicums involving human subjects and animal research
  - Graduate Certificates
Section 2: Planning Your Practicum

Timeline and Planning
- Students should begin planning at least one (1) semester before enrolling in practicum. Students traveling internationally for practicum, should begin planning at least 6-9 months in advance.
- What semester students pursue practicum is a decision between the student and their faculty advisor or faculty mentor. However, the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement strongly encourages DrPH students complete the courses required prior to the preliminary examination prior to enrolling in practicum.

Suitable Experiences
Applied practice experiences may involve governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial, and for-profit settings or appropriate university-affiliated settings. All practicum experiences, whether in-person or remote/virtual, should include a community-engagement component whether direct (working in/with community) or indirect (through the production of deliverables).

Practicum experiences may take place at a student’s current place of employment as long as the experience is outside the scope of their current position (e.g., working with a different department, office, or team). Lab-based experiences outside a university setting are acceptable. Lab-based experiences in a university setting must be primarily focused on community engagement, typically with external partners. University health promotion or wellness centers may also be appropriate.

Identifying Practicum Opportunities
There are many ways to find a practicum. An appropriate experience should meet your learning needs and be beneficial to the agencies or organizations involved.

Suggestions for finding practicum opportunities include:
- Reviewing the list of practicum and internship opportunities available in Handshake.
- Asking their faculty advisor or other faculty members for recommendations. Students can search the Faculty section of the School of Public Health website to find faculty with similar interests who may assist with practicum placements.
- Network by attending lectures presented by visiting guests, who are often leaders in their respective fields, and by joining the UTHealth School of Public Health LinkedIn group to network with Alumni.
- Talking with student peers, many of whom work or volunteer in the field.
- Contact an organization that interests them and develop a practicum on their own.
- Explore the listing of popular practicum sites.
- Visit external job boards that posts internship positions (e.g., Indeed.com, AcademyHealth.org, Internships.com, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, etc.)

Practicum Team
Each practicum experience requires a practicum team comprised of the;
- Student
  Responsible for planning, proposing, arraigning, leading, and completing the experience.
- Faculty Mentor
  A UTHealth School of Public Health faculty mentor responsible for approving, overseeing, and grading the practicum. The faculty mentor can be the student’s faculty advisor or another faculty member who has experience with the practicum topic. Students can discuss with their faculty advisor and view the faculty directory to identify a faculty mentor.
- Preceptor (site supervisor)
  The preceptor or site supervisor will oversee practicum-related work at the host organization. The preceptor is responsible for any onboarding or orientation activities relevant to the position. If the preceptor requires UTHealth to sign an agreement before the practicum experience can begin, forward these requests to the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement (practicum@uth.tmc.edu). A student’s faculty advisor may not serve as their practicum preceptor.
Plan a Practicum Project Meeting Competency and Deliverable Requirements

Students should work with their practicum team to identify a high-quality project that is meaningful to the organization and demonstrates a depth of competence. DrPH students must select a minimum of five (5) competencies. At least three (3) of these five competencies must be DrPH Foundational Knowledge Competencies; one (1) of which must be from the leadership, management and governance domain (DrPH-4 through DrPH-13). Two (2) of the five competencies may be either Major-Specific Competencies or additional DrPH Foundational Competencies. DrPH students must develop at least one (1) high-quality product that is meaningful for the organization and advances public health practice. Additionally, DrPH students must complete a reflection that directly addresses DrPH Foundational Competency 11: Assess one’s own strengths, weaknesses, and leadership capacities. A list of competencies, examples of acceptable products for specific competencies, and a reflection template can be found in the Appendix.

Section 3: Develop Your Learning Contract and Enroll

Salesforce Learning Contract System (new for Spring 2022)

Students should follow the steps below to develop using the Salesforce learning contract system and enroll in practicum. Students should discuss all aspects of their practicum experience and learning contract with both their practicum team prior to submission. Student and faculty guides are available on the Practicum Overview section of mySPH to assist with navigating the learning contract system.

1. Create your learning contract in the mySPH Salesforce practicum learning contract system.

Students should reference submission deadlines on the Practicum Overview section of mySPH as they prepare to complete a learning contract. Students are strongly encouraged to develop a learning contract as early as possible in order to receive approval and register for the practicum experience.

To successfully complete the learning contract, you will need the following information:

- **Project Description**:
  - Start and end date of practicum experience
  - Number of hours per week
    - **Note:** DrPH students must complete at least three (3) credit hours of practicum credit as indicated on the degree planners. Students earn one academic credit per 60 hours of practicum and therefore are expected to complete a minimum of 180 hours of practicum experience.
  - Identify if your practicum is at UTHealth School of Public Health
    - **Note:** Students must select a practicum site in a non-academic setting, unless the setting is externally facing, and primarily focused on community engagement.
  - Project location name and type
  - Project summary
    - **Note:** Use this section to describe your project idea. Identify a public health problem, need, or question. Explain the significance of the public health problem, how you aim to address it, the major activities and goals you hope to achieve and what you hope to accomplish.
  - Description of community engagement
    - **Note:** Describe populations, external stakeholders, community members, or others with whom you will interact during this project. Describe target audiences for reports, presentations, publications, training materials, or other forms of communication during your project.
  - Travel information: Students traveling internationally to complete a practicum must complete additional requirements as described in the Appendix.

- **Registration Information**
  - Semester and year of enrollment
  - Number of credit hours
  - Describe special circumstances
    - **Note:** If applicable, you may use this section to describe any specific requirements for your practicum that your faculty mentor or the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement should keep in mind while reviewing the learning contract (e.g. Archer/Schweitzer fellow).
- **Site Preceptor and Faculty Mentor**
  - Name and contact information for site preceptor and faculty mentor
    - Note: Your faculty mentor may not also serve as your preceptor.

- **Travel Information**
  - Notate if this experience will require international travel.

- **Project Location**
  - Practicum experience location information (i.e. physical address)

- **Competencies and Deliverables**
  - Competencies:
    - Students must select a minimum of five (5) competencies. DrPH students must select at least three (3) of these five competencies must be DrPH Foundational Knowledge Competencies, one of which must be from the leadership, management and governance domain (DrPH-4 through DrPH-13). Two (2) of the five competencies may be either Major-Specific or additional DrPH Foundational Competencies. Please review the list of DrPH Foundational Knowledge and Major-Specific Competencies in the Appendix.
  - Deliverables:
    - Students must identify a minimum of one (1), high-quality final product that will result from the practicum experience and briefly describe the proposed final product. DrPH students must also complete a reflection in which they assess their strengths, weaknesses and leadership capacities as related to the practicum experience (DrPH-11).
    - The School understands final products may change or evolve throughout the practicum experience; students will have the ability to modify the product type and description upon completion of the practicum experience. Final products will be submitted in mySPH upon completion of the experience.

2. **Submit your learning contract.**
   - After you have submitted your learning contract, your faculty mentor will receive an automatic e-mail prompting their review and approval of your learning contract.
     - Note: Follow-up with your faculty mentor if you do not receive approval within a few business days. The automatic e-mail may have been blocked as spam.
   - Once your faculty mentor has approved the learning contract, the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement will review the document.
     - The office cannot approve learning contracts that do not have faculty mentor approval.
     - Please allow at least three business days for review.
     - Any required changes will be e-mailed to you and your faculty mentor.
   - Your preceptor will be able to review your learning contract once approved.
   - As part of the practicum onboarding process, some organizations have an affiliation or program agreement they require UTHealth to review and sign.
     - If you receive a request to complete an agreement for your practicum, please forward the request to the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement (practicum@uth.tmc.edu).
     - All international projects will require an agreement unless pursued through Child and Family Health International (CFHI). Separate procedures for agreements with international preceptors are followed as these are negotiated by the UTHealth Office of Global Health Initiatives.

3. **Register for practicum in myUTH.**
   - The learning contract must be submitted and approved by the student’s faculty mentor and the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement prior to enrolling in practicum credit in myUTH.
   - After approving your learning contract, the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement will e-mail a registration code for practicum (PH 9997) to your UTHealth e-mail account. Please allow at least one business day after your learning contract is fully approved to receive your registration code.
   - Search in myUTH for the course by the class number provided to you.
Register for the number of credits as specified on the approved learning contract with the identified faculty mentor using the unique registration permission code provided to you.

Confirm you have selected the correct number of academic credits (one credit for every 60 hours of practicum) as the myUTH system defaults to one credit.

Splitting the same experience/enrollment over multiple semesters?

- Three (3) credits total of PH 9997 Practicum are required for MPH students. Students can split practicum credit enrollment over multiple semesters. A learning contract is required for each semester enrolled.
- The learning contract should detail the schedule, expectations, etc. for that particular semester –required each semester before enrollment.
- Students splitting the same experience over multiple semesters may submit all final deliverables during the final semester, but submit a “progress report” or something similar as a deliverable in earlier semesters –consult with personal practicum team.
- Let your practicum team and the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement know in the learning contract your intentions to break up enrollment over multiple semesters.

Section 4: Practicum Completion and Grading

Finishing the practicum.
- Conduct the activities described in your learning contract, including meeting with your faculty mentor.
- Complete and submit your final products in Practicum Overview section of mySPH Salesforce Learning Contract System
  - You may upload your deliverables via the same system utilized to submit your learning contract.
  - You must first create the final product by selecting the type of product and then uploading the file. Each file must be uploaded separately.
- Your faculty mentor will review your deliverables, ensuring competencies are met and quality is acceptable, and submit a final grade of pass (“P”), fail (“F”), or incomplete (“I”) in myUTH.
- Notify the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement and your faculty mentor if you are not able to complete your practicum by the end of the semester.

Evaluate the practicum.
- Complete the student practicum evaluation e-mailed at the end of the semester.
  - The Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement will also e-mail the preceptor an evaluation near the end of the semester and provide this evaluation to the faculty mentor.
Appendix

There are resources available to students through their academic career as a School of Public Health student. These resources are particularly valuable to students in their applied practice experience. Students are encouraged to review and utilize the following resources in preparation and throughout their applied practice experience.

DrPH Foundational Knowledge, Major-Specific Competencies, and Product Examples

Students must select five (5) competencies. DrPH students must select at least three (3) of these five competencies from the DrPH Foundational Knowledge Competencies; one of which must be from the leadership, management and governance domain (DrPH-4 through DrPH-13). Two (2) of the five competencies may be either Major-Specific or additional DrPH Foundational Competencies. Although it can be completed in the same setting as an MPH practicum, the DrPH practicum must incorporate higher-level skills (e.g. proposal development, intervention development, strategic planning, policy analysis and/or epidemiologic analysis) than the MPH practicum. DrPH students are required to develop at least one (1) high quality product and a written reflection.

Listed below are examples of high-quality products that students can adapt to fit their selected competencies. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, however, it does provide concrete examples of what is considered “high quality” to meet the DrPH product requirement. If you propose to develop a product not listed here, it must be of similar scope and complexity as the examples listed below.

**Examples of “High-quality” DrPH Products**

1. Grant application and or proposal for a major foundation or governmental agency
2. Evaluation plan for an intervention within an external facing setting
3. Conduct the evaluation of an existing intervention and/or program
4. Conduct a training that demonstrates the student’s ability to assess a population’s knowledge and needs this includes the completion of a training manual and an evaluation report of the completed training
5. A health surveillance plan to monitor population health, health equity, and public health services
6. An epidemiologic analysis that identifies factors that affect population health and can be applied for the development or evaluation of disease control and prevention strategies
7. Conduct a qualitative analysis of a community-based participatory research project that leads to action orientated results for community benefit and/or impact
8. Conduct a comprehensive assessment that includes identifying needs, resources and policies impacting population health
9. Intervention plan that includes (logic model, theoretical framework, content, scope & sequence and implementation plan)
10. A strategic plan that incorporates guiding decisions and actions for an organization, collaborative, agency and/or effort that considers current organizational climate, public health goals and objectives, new initiatives and recommendations.
11. A policy analysis to evaluate the impact of health programs, policies, and systems.
12. A strategic communication plan that 1) identifies a community program, segmented audiences, effective ways to reach audiences; 2) includes concepts, messages, and materials representatives of the target audiences and 3) includes strategies for testing and evaluating messaging and channels
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Associated “High Quality” Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-1. Explain qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods and policy analysis research and evaluation methods to address health issues at multiple (individual, group, organization, community and population) levels</td>
<td>5, 6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-2. Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue</td>
<td>2, 3, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-3. Explain the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programs and to address a population’s health</td>
<td>5, 6, 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>DrPH-4. Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders and other partners</td>
<td>7, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-5. Communicate public health science to diverse stakeholders, including individuals at all levels of health literacy, for purposes of influencing behavior and policies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DrPH-6. Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values and potential contributions from multiple professions and systems in addressing public health problems</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cannot be demonstrated through a written product</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>DrPH-7. Create a strategic plan</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DrPH-8. Facilitate shared decision making through negotiation and consensus-building methods</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cannot be demonstrated through a written product</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-9. Create organizational change strategies</td>
<td>9, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-10. Propose strategies to promote inclusion and equity within public health programs, policies and systems</td>
<td>9, 10, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-11. Assess one’s own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities including cultural proficiency</td>
<td><strong>Completed through the required self-reflection component</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-12. Propose human, fiscal and other resources to achieve a strategic goal</td>
<td>1, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-13. Cultivate new resources and revenue streams to achieve a strategic goal</td>
<td>1, 8, 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>DrPH-14. Design a system-level intervention to address a public health issue</td>
<td>9, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-15. Integrate knowledge of cultural values and practices in the design of public health policies and programs</td>
<td>9, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-16. Integrate scientific information, legal and regulatory approaches, ethical frameworks and varied stakeholder interests in policy development and analysis</td>
<td>10, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH-17. Propose interprofessional team approaches to improving public health</td>
<td>4, 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>DrPH-18. Assess an audience’s knowledge and learning needs</td>
<td>8, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Associated “High Quality” Products</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>DrPH-19. Deliver training or educational experiences that promote learning in academic, organizational or community settings</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>DrPH-20. Use best practice modalities in pedagogical practices</td>
<td>4</td>
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**DrPH Major-Specific Competencies:**

**Health Promotion Health Education Competencies**

DrPH-H1. Evaluate the appropriate use of social or behavioral sciences theory in developing and evaluating community-based interventions.

DrPH-H2. Select and apply relevant theoretical change methods (e.g., coalition building; technical assistance) and community health practice-based processes (e.g., gallery walk; community-facilitated logic models) aimed at creating environmental level changes for community health promotion.

DrPH-H3. Develop a theory-guided research proposal for conducting a stakeholder-led community health improvement.

DrPH-H4. Analyze data from non-randomized research designs using advanced statistical methods.

DrPH-H5. Recognizing the role of stakeholder involvement, use at least one implementation science framework to develop an implementation and dissemination plan.

**Community Health Practice Competencies**

DrPH-C1. Support and defend a public health policy issue, program, or initiative, etc. affecting vulnerable communities.

DrPH-C2. Develop a grant or fellowship proposal with a community partner to support a public health initiative.

DrPH-C3. Apply community-based frameworks in developing or evaluating community-based interventions.

DrPH-C4. Analyze and evaluate interactions among components of the public health system as they relate to the health of populations.

DrPH-C5. Utilize evidence-based decision tools and pragmatic strategies to influence population health.

**Example Skillsets and Deliverables by Major/Program**

**Department of Biostatistics and Data Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master of Science (MS)</th>
<th>Biostatistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use appropriate statistical methods and models to analyze data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outline statistical analysis strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use probability distributions and theory of statistical inference</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</th>
<th>Biostatistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design a simulation study to show a method’s effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a unified methodological and theoretical framework to analyze data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use advanced computing techniques</td>
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### Department of Epidemiology, Human Genetics and Environmental Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master of Public Health (MPH)</th>
<th>Environmental Health</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct risk characterization</td>
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<td>• Describe effectiveness of regulatory programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Evaluate function, structure, and financing of environmental programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
<td>Environmental Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appraise different types of hazards based on sources and routes</td>
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<td>• Compare and communicate different mitigation strategies for environmental hazards</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop, implement or evaluate a total worker health strategy or intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Public Health (MPH)</td>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Apply data collection and management skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Evaluate problem in terms of magnitude, person and time</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Appropriately interpret measures of disease frequency and association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop a research proposal to design, conduct, and interpret results of study</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Select and apply appropriate multivariable statistical analysis techniques in study</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Apply causal inference theory and principles of epidemiology to interpret data</td>
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### Department of Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</th>
<th>Behavioral Science and Health Promotion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Design a methodologically rigorous theory-informed research plan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conduct a psychometric analysis to test the properties of a measurement instrument</td>
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<td>• Critique and justify selection of theoretical framework to explain determinants of health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Public Health (MPH)</td>
<td>Health Promotion/Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct needs assessment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Apply systematic planning framework</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Describe a place to evaluate a health promotion intervention</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Public Health (MPH)</td>
<td>Health Promotion/Health Education -Dietetic Internship</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use EAP to review a nutrition topic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop a public health nutrition intervention based on community needs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Communicate patient cases using professional nutrition standards</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)</td>
<td>Health Promotion/Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Select and apply relevant theoretical change methods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Analyze data from non-randomized research designs using advanced statistical methods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop theory-guided research proposal</td>
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## Department of Management, Policy and Community Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master of Public Health (MPH)</th>
<th>Community Health Practice</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Compare and contrast program planning models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborate with community organization on social justice initiatives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Examine role of leadership in public health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)</td>
<td>Community Health Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop grant or fellowship proposal with community partner</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Apply community-based frameworks in developing and evaluating community-based interventions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Utilize evidence-based decision tools and strategies to influence population health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
<td>Health Economics and Health Services Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop a survey research design and analytic strategy to solve public health issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identify and critique strategies for measuring “quality” and effectiveness in healthcare</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop data analytical study designs and apply econometric and statistical regression methods to analyze and draw inferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Public Health (MPH)</td>
<td>Health Services Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare a detailed policy analysis to assess alternative policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Describe internal and external validity strengths and limitations of health policy evaluations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understand and apply microeconomic theory in market system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Public Health (MPH)</td>
<td>Healthcare Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Evaluate and analyze quality, safety, and financial performance measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Synthesizes organization opportunities and challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Selects, integrates, and evaluates organizational resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
<td>Healthcare Management and Health Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use a research-based framework to evaluate quality and safety performance measures in healthcare</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Analyze the importance of financial transactions within the healthcare delivery systems and its impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assess research questions, study designs, sources of evidence and research methodologies appropriate for management and policy research</td>
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DrPH Reflection Template

Discuss your practicum in 2-3 pages. Address each topic below using these section headings: Description, Contributions, and Leadership.

A. DESCRIPTION: Describe your practicum experience and the goals of your project. Discuss your responsibilities, activities, deliverables, and accomplishments during this practicum. If your practicum was part of a larger project, program, or initiative, describe your role and explain how your practicum fit within this larger project, program, or initiative.

B. CONTRIBUTIONS: Describe how one or more of your final products benefited your practicum host site or preceptor. Describe how your project contributed to an organizational goal, mission, or objective. Describe how your project benefited the community, population, or clients served by your host site or preceptor.

C. LEADERSHIP: Describe how your practicum helped develop your leadership or management skills. Describe how your practicum improved your cultural proficiency. Assess your strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities.
International Practicum Experiences

- Experiences through Child and Family Health International
  - UTHealth School of Public Health encourages students to pursue international practicum experiences through Child and Family Health International (CFHI), a non-profit organization boasting 40+ programs in 12 countries connecting students with local health professionals and community leaders transforming perspectives about self, global health, and healing.
  - Students who are admitted to CFHI and identify an international experience can bypass the traditionally required international agreement process, as UTHealth as an agreement with CFHI, and can work with the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement to complete a learning contract and submit a Request for Travel Authorization.

- Experiences Developed Independently
  - If a student plans to travel internationally for their practicum, they must e-mail the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement (practicum@uth.tmc.edu) as soon as they find out who will be hosting the experience.
  - Students must provide information about the host organization, preceptor, and an English-speaking contact along with approximate dates of travel and the project.
  - The Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement will initiate a program agreement with the international host through the UTHealth Office of Global Health Initiatives. Negotiating this agreement can take several months and is required before travel.

- At least two months prior to travel, students must provide the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement with:
  - A copy of flight information,
  - A travel itinerary,
  - A copy of their International SOS registration, and
  - The practicum travel application (provided by the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement upon request).

  The Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement will assist students with the Request for Travel Authorization process required prior to travel.

Considerations for International students

- Students who work with the Office of International Affairs must notify their international advisor as early as possible about their intention to pursue a practicum experience.
- For these instances, International Students must receive Curricular Practical Training (CPT) approval through the Office of International Affairs before beginning their experience.
- To apply for CPT approval, please review the following instructions:
  - Consult your international advisor.
  - Complete the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) form.
  - Follow learning contract approval procedures and enroll in PH 9997.
  - Submit the CPT form along with the following items to SPHStudentRecords@uth.tmc.edu;
    - A copy of your approved practicum learning contract
    - A letter on organization letterhead from your preceptor specifying the beginning and ending dates of the practicum, your practicum learning objectives, hours per week, location of your practicum, and whether the practicum is paid or unpaid.
      - Note: If an unpaid position converts to a paid position during the semester, or vice versa, contact the Office of International Affairs immediately.
  - If you are traveling internationally for your practicum and CPT approval is not applicable, you should still consult with your international advisor on your travel and practicum. See guidelines for international travel on the Practicum Travel webpage.

International Students must receive approval from the Office of International Affairs before beginning their practicum experience.
Human Subjects or Animal Research Considerations

- Students must work with their faculty mentor to determine if their experience will involve human subjects research requiring Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.
- If IRB approval is required, students must receive approval from UTHealth's Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) even if the preceptor or host organization has an approved protocol for the study. In addition to receiving approval through UTHealth's CPHS, students must check with their preceptor about being added the practicum site's protocol, if conducting the practicum outside of UTHealth.
- Students who are unsure whether the activities for their practicum involve human subjects research should e-mail a detailed description of their activities to CPHS at cphs@uth.tmc.edu. A staff person at CPHS can help determine if the activities meet the definition of human subjects research.
- Animal Research: If the practicum involves research on animal subjects or animal derived materials, students must discuss these proposed activities with the faculty mentor and the Animal Welfare Committee.

Available Onboarding and Training Materials

- HIPPA Training: If the practicum experience involves working with protected health information (PHI), students must review the CITI module in Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) training. This training can be accessed here.
- If the student will work with PHI at a site external to UTHealth, they must ask their preceptor if the host organization provides site-specific HIPPA training.
  - Requests for review and approval for animal research must be submitted through iRIS.
- Hazardous Materials: If the student will be working with hazardous chemicals, radioactive materials, or infectious or biological agents at a UTHealth campus or facility, they must work with the faculty mentor to complete appropriate steps. Please visit UTHealth’s Safety, Health, Environment and Risk Management’s website for additional resources
  - If the student feels as though they have not received adequate training or are concerned for their safety while at the practicum site, they should not proceed with these activities and contact the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement and their faculty mentor.

Certificate Program Requirements

If a student is enrolled in either of the following certificate programs, the student should verify with their advisor that the practicum is suitable for their certificate.

- Global Health
- Maternal and Child Health
### Popular Practicum Sites by Campus

**Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement**

Below is a non-exhaustive list of practicum sites students have used since 2018. This list provides examples of sites students may conduct a practicum project however, students are welcome to pursue experiences elsewhere.

#### AUSTIN

- Texas Department of State Health Services
- City of Austin
- University of Texas at Austin
- Dell Medical School
- CommUnity Care
- It’s Time Texas

#### BROWNSVILLE

- University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
- Lincoln Park Alternative High School
- Texas Department of State Health Services
- Parents for Advocating for Student Success
- Le Fe Policy Research and Education Center
- City of Brownsville

#### DALLAS

- University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
- Susan G. Komen
- Planned Parenthood
- Dallas County Health and Human Services
- Children’s Medical Center
- Safe Kids Dallas Area Coalition

#### EL PASO

- Texas Tech University Health Science Center
- El Paso Department of Public Health
- Centro San Vicente Health Center
- Child Crisis Center of El Paso
- El Paso Water
- Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center

#### HOUSTON

- Baylor College of Medicine
- MD Anderson Cancer Center
- Texas Children’s Hospital
- Harris County Public Health and Environmental Sciences
- Harris Health System
- Houston Health Department

#### SAN ANTONIO

- UT Health San Antonio (all schools)
- City of San Antonio Metropolitan Health Department
- United States Air Force
- Methodist Healthcare Ministries
- Texas Diabetes Institute
- University Health System
Frequently Asked Questions

• **What is a practicum?**
  o A practicum is a unique learning experience that is planned, supervised, evaluated and graded. Practicum experiences allow students the opportunity to apply classroom education towards a real-world public health problem in a work setting. Each experience varies according to the student’s interests and preceptor’s needs and must be mutually beneficial for the student and the community preceptor. Each practicum culminates in the submission of two final products that are planned and approved by the preceptor and the faculty mentor before the student begins the experience. Students have the option to undergo several practicum experiences.

• **What are the benefits of a practicum?**
  o The benefits of a practicum experience are many! Students learn practical skills, develop useful contacts in the practice community, gain valuable work experience in the field of public health, and produce final products of sufficiently high quality to be published or presented at a conference. These activities and skills enhance resumes and potentially improve a student’s job prospects.

• **Who is required to complete a practicum?**
  o A practicum is required for students enrolled in our professional degree programs. These include the Master in Public Health (MPH) degree and the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree.

• **Why is a practicum required?**
  o The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the accrediting body for Schools of Public Health in the United States, requires that students earning MPH and DrPH degrees receive practice-based training in a setting outside the classroom. Additionally, formal surveys conducted by the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and anecdotal evidence from local meetings suggest that employers prefer to hire graduates with tangible skills acquired through practice experience. Therefore, the practicum is an essential part of our curriculum that is not likely to be waived.

• **Can MS and PhD students enroll?**
  o Yes, students in the Master of Science (MS) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree programs are encouraged, although not required, to undergo a practicum experience. These students may elect to enroll in PH9997. Students should consult with their faculty advisor before pursuing a practicum experience.

• **Is academic credit earned?**
  o Yes, MPH and DrPH students earn academic credit for completing a practicum. Students receive credit by enrolling and completing the requirements of academic course PH 9997. Generally, students earn one academic credit for about 60 hours of public health practice and three PH 9997 credits may be applied toward your degree. These three credits may come from a single practicum experience or several practicum experiences. While enrolling in additional credit hours can enrich your public health experience, only three practicum credit hours count toward your degree.

• **May I have more than one practicum experience?**
  o Yes, if permitted by your faculty advisor, you may have more than one practicum experience. Keep in mind, however, that only three academic credits count toward your degree.

• **How do I get started?**
  o A successful practicum involves three key individuals: the student, the School of Public Health faculty mentor and the community preceptor. Each individual formally accepts the responsibility assigned to their role on the project. In short, the student bears the bulk of the responsibility to develop, conduct, report and evaluate the experience; the faculty guides and approves the project; and the preceptor supervises and evaluates the student’s performance and final products. We recommend that you plan for your practicum at least one semester prior to starting your practicum. If you wish to complete an international practicum, we recommend that you plan even earlier than this.

• **What if I have more questions?**
  o You may e-mail your question to the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement at Practicum@uth.tmc.edu. This mailbox is the most reliable way to receive a quick response to your questions or concerns.