



Master of Public Health (MPH) Practicum Guide

PH 9997 Practicum

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A practicum, or applied practice experience, is the application of learning to a ‘real world’ setting. Students in the Master of Public Health (MPH) program are required to complete a practicum.

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

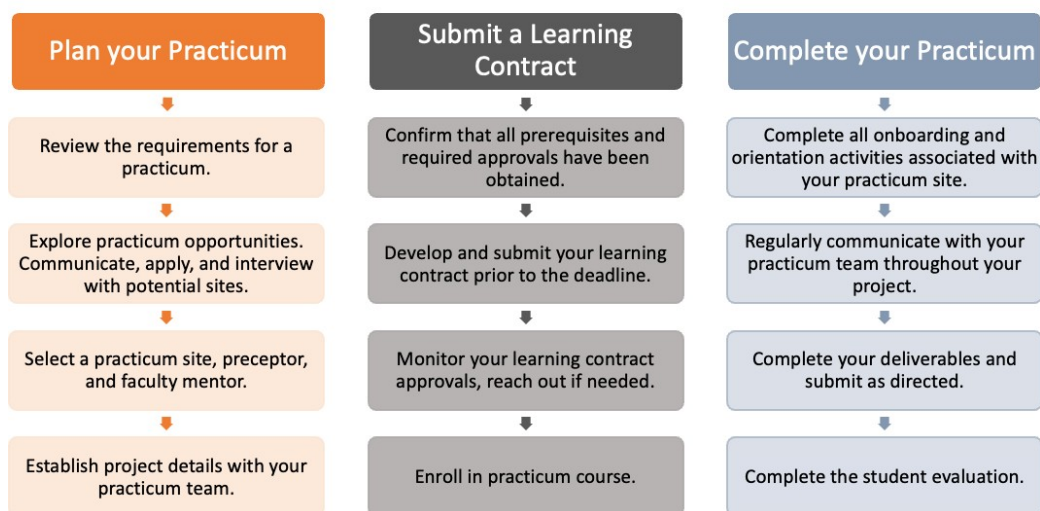
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Section 1: Practicum Overview

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

Practicum Process



Requirements Overview

Practicum Site:

- Experiences can be pursued in-person or virtually, both domestically and internationally.
- A practicum site must be 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).
- Additional approvals are required for international practicum opportunities.
- UTHouston School of Public Health does not require timesheets.

Practicum Team:

- Each practicum requires a preceptor (site supervisor) who oversees the experience at the host organization, and
- A UTHouston School of Public Health faculty mentor to approve, oversee, and grade the practicum.

Practicum Contact/Credit Hours:

- Students must complete a minimum of 180 contact hours. Students may pursue more than one practicum or split over multiple semesters.
- Students must attain a total of three academic credit hours. No more than three hours of practicum count towards the MPH degree.
- Prior to enrolling in the appropriate amount of credit hours with a faculty mentor, students must develop and receive approval for a learning contract.

Competencies:

- Students must select a minimum of [five competencies](#), with at least three from the MPH Foundational Competency list.

Final Products/Deliverables:

- MPH students must develop at least two practical, high-quality, non-academic work products that benefit the practicum site and demonstrate the student’s attainment of the selected MPH competencies. [See a list of final products here.](#)
- Final products are tangible items submitted to the university, faculty mentor, and preceptor for review.
- MPH students may not submit a reflection as a required final product.

Additional considerations for:

- [International students](#)
- [International practicum experiences](#)
- Practicums involving [human subjects and animal research](#)

Section 2: Plan Your Practicum

Timeline and Planning

Which 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 students to complete MPH Core Courses before enrolling in practicum. Students should begin planning at least one semester before enrolling in practicum. Students [traveling internationally for practicum](#) should start planning at least **six to nine months in advance**.

Suitable Experiences

According to the Council on Education for Public Health, “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 the 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 primarily focus on community engagement, typically with external partners. University health promotion or wellness centers may also be appropriate.

Explore Practicum Opportunities and Project Ideas.

There are many ways to find a practicum. An appropriate experience should meet the student’s learning needs and benefit the host organization. Suggestions for finding practicum opportunities include:

- Review practicum and internship opportunities available on [Handshake](#)
- Ask their faculty advisor or other faculty members for recommendations. Students can search the [Faculty section of the UTHealth Houston School of Public Health website](#) to find faculty with similar interests who may assist with practicum placements.
- Join the growing [UTHealth Houston Alumni Community](#). Our platform hosts hundreds of active UTHealth Alumni eager to serve as mentors and potentially collaborate with our current students. You can easily find a mentor based on job function, industry, company, or through personalized matching using your LinkedIn profile similarities. Connect with UTHealth Houston School of Public Health on [LinkedIn](#) to stay informed about school events, news, and additional information.
- Talk with student peers, many of whom work or volunteer in the field.
- Contact an organization that interests them and develop a practicum independently.
- Exploring the listing of popular practicum [sites](#).
- Visit external job boards and social media platforms that post internship positions (e.g., [LinkedIn](#), [Indeed.com](#), [AcademyHealth.org](#), [Internships.com](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [National Institutes of Health](#), etc.)
- Communicate, apply, and interview with potential sites.

International Practicum Experiences

UTHealth Houston School of Public Health students can pursue international practicum opportunities. Guidance on international practicum experiences is subject to change. Review the International Practicum Planning Resource document in the [Practicum Overview section of mySPH](#) for the most current information. Below are two options for students to pursue international practicum experiences via Child and Family Health International or a self-developed experience.

Experiences through Child and Family Health International

- UTHealth Houston School of Public Health encourages students to pursue international practicum experiences through [Child Family Health International](#) (CFHI), a non-profit organization with over 40 programs in 12 countries connecting students with local health professionals and community leaders, transforming perspectives about self, global health, and healing.
- Students admitted to CFHI and identifying an international experience can bypass the traditionally required international agreement process. UTHealth Houston has 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.

Self-developed Experiences

- If a student plans to participate in an international practicum, either in-person or virtual, they must e-mail the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement (practicum@uth.tmc.edu) as soon as they identify a host site/organization.
- Students must provide information about the host organization, preceptor, and an English-speaking contact, along with approximate travel dates (if applicable) and the project.
- The Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement will initiate a program agreement process with the international host through the [UTHealth Houston Office of Global Initiatives](#). **Negotiating this agreement can take several months and is required before travel.**

If travel is involved, at least two months prior, students pursuing an international practicum experience must provide the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement with the following:

- 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 before travel.

Considerations for International Students

Students who work with the Office of International Affairs (OIA) must notify their international advisor as early as possible and must receive approval from the Office of International Affairs before beginning their practicum experience. For these instances, students must receive Curricular Practical Training (CPT) approval through OIA before beginning their experience. Students are strongly encouraged to submit their practicum learning contract prior to the opening of the registration for the semester of practicum enrollment to allow ample time for CPT processing by OIA.

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 end dates of the practicum, your practicum learning objectives, hours per week, the 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 OIA immediately.

CPT questions can be directed to the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services (SPHStudentRecords@uth.tmc.edu).

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 Houston'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 Houston's CPHS, students must check with their preceptor about being added to the practicum site's protocol if conducting the practicum outside of UTHealth Houston.

Students unsure whether their practicum activities 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](#).

The ADA, Accommodations, and Practicum Experiences

A comprehensive antidiscrimination law for persons with disabilities, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) extends to virtually all sectors of society and every aspect of daily living, including work and internship locations. Upon request, an employer must make reasonable accommodations for a qualified applicant or employee if it would not impose an "undue hardship" on business operations. Reasonable accommodations are adjustments or modifications an employer provides to enable people with disabilities to enjoy equal employment opportunities. Please note the difference between employment accommodations (e.g., PAID practicum) and academic accommodations applied to a practicum setting (NOT paid). In the case of a paid practicum, the experience would likely have employment accommodations applied instead of academic accommodations. Accommodations vary depending on the needs of the individual applicant or employee.

If you are a student seeking reasonable accommodations at your practicum host site and would like assistance with this process, please get in touch with the UTHealth Houston School of Public Health designated 504 Coordinator, [Dr. Mary Ann Smith](#), or the UTHealth Houston Diversity and Equal Opportunity office by calling (713) 500-CALL (2255). Additional information is available on the [UTHealth Houston Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity's website](#).

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 works with PHI at a site external to UTHealth Houston, 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 is working with hazardous chemicals, radioactive materials, or infectious or biological agents at a UTHealth Houston campus or facility, they must work with the faculty mentor to complete appropriate steps. Please visit [UTHealth Houston's Safety, Health, Environment and Risk Management](#) website for additional resources. If the student is working with hazardous chemicals, radioactive materials, or infectious or biological agents at a site external to UTHealth Houston, students must follow all safety regulations and training at the practicum host site.

If the student feels 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.

Select the Faculty Mentor and Preceptor

Each practicum experience requires a practicum team led by the student.

- **Student**
Responsible for planning, proposing, arranging, leading, and completing the experience.
- **Faculty Mentor**
A UTHouston School of Public Health faculty mentor approves, oversees, and grades 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's organization requires UTHouston 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.

Meet 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. MPH students must select a minimum of five competencies to attain and exercise during their practicum experience. At least three of these five competencies must be MPH Foundational Knowledge Competencies. Students may select all five competencies from the MPH Foundational Knowledge Competencies but may choose to select competencies from their respective Major-Specific Competencies. MPH -Customized students should select competencies linked to their Advanced Public Health Coursework.

Students must demonstrate attaining all selected competencies by producing at least two practical, non-academic work products. MPH students may not submit a reflection as a required final product. Additionally, one final product cannot summarize the other final product. A list of competencies and examples of acceptable products for specific competencies can be found in the [Appendix](#).

Section 3: Develop and Submit a Learning Contract

Practicum Learning Contract System

Students should follow the steps below to develop the learning contract and enroll in practicum. Students should discuss all aspects of their practicum experience and learning contract practicum team before submission. Student and faculty guides are available in the [Practicum Overview](#) section of mySPH to assist with navigating the learning contract system.

1. Create a Learning Contract in mySPH [Practicum Learning Contract System](#)

Students should refer to submission deadlines in the [Practicum Overview section of mySPH](#) as they prepare to complete a learning contract. Students are strongly encouraged to develop and submit a learning contract as early as possible. To successfully complete the learning contract, the student will need the following information (here is a [template](#)):

A Project Description that includes:

- The start and end date of the applied practicum experience.
- The approximate number of hours per week the student will devote to the project.
Note: MPH students must complete at least three (3) practicum credit hours as indicated on the degree planners. Students earn one academic credit per 60 practicum hours and are expected to complete at least 180 hours of practicum experience.
- Identify if your practicum is at UTHouston 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 described in the [Appendix](#).

Registration Information:

- Semester and year of enrollment
- Number of credit hours (between one and three)
- 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., GET PHIT, Archer/Schweitzer fellow, Texas Tech MD/MPH SCI course, extending over multiple semesters, etc.).

Site Preceptor and Faculty Mentor information:

- Name and contact information for the site preceptor, including email address, phone number, organization name, and address
- Name of the faculty mentor

Note: Only SPH faculty members may serve as practicum mentors. Your faculty mentor may not also serve as your preceptor.

Travel Information:

- Indicate if this experience will require international travel.
Note: This often requires a longer approval process by the university.

Project Location

- Practicum experience location information (i.e., physical address).
Note: if the practicum is virtual, select that checkbox. If the practicum is not all virtual, use the site address, including the ZIP code that is most associated with the activities of the practicum or the preceptor.

Competencies and Deliverables

- Competencies:
Select at least five competencies – at least three MPH Foundational Knowledge Competencies and up to all five if appropriate. MPH students may alternatively choose two additional competencies from their Major-Specific Competencies. MPH Customized students are asked to select Major-Specific Competencies that align with their completed Advanced Public Health Coursework. Please review the list of MPH Foundational Knowledge and MPH Major-Specific Competencies in the [Appendix](#).
- Deliverables:
Students must produce and submit at least two final products that demonstrate mastery of the competencies and will be used by the host agency. Select the proposed final products and briefly describe them.

Notes:

- *Deliverables are tangible items submitted to the school and host agency that the preceptor and faculty mentor can review. For example, if a presentation is one final product, a copy of the slides and notes would be the uploaded final product.*
- *MPH students may not submit a reflection as a final product.*
- *Final products may change or evolve throughout the practicum experience. Students can modify details in the learning contract after receiving approval from their team.*
- *Final products must be submitted in mySPH upon completion of the experience.*

2. Submit the Learning Contract

After you submit your learning contract, your faculty mentor will receive an automatic e-mail prompting their review and approval or revision suggestions. Once your faculty mentor has approved the learning contract, the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement will review the document. Your preceptor will review your learning contract after the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement has approved it. Following the preceptor's approval, you will receive an email from the practicum services team with enrollment information and a code to enroll in Practicum.

Notes:

- *Please allow at least three business days for each party to review.*
- *You are encouraged to follow up with your faculty mentor and preceptor if you still await approval within a few*

business days. The automatic e-mail may have been blocked as spam.

- *The Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement can only approve learning contracts that have faculty mentor approval. Any required changes will be e-mailed to you and your faculty mentor.*
- *As part of the practicum onboarding process, some organizations have an affiliation or program agreement they require UTHHealth Houston 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 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 UTHHealth Houston Office of Global Health Initiatives.*

3. Register for PH 9997 Practicum in myUTH

- The learning contract must be submitted and approved by the student's faculty mentor, preceptor, and the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement before 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 UTHHealth 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 select 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 total credits 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 that particular semester's schedule, expectations, etc. Please notify the practicum services team in the special circumstances area if you are splitting enrollment over multiple semesters.

Section 4: Practicum Completion and Grading

Finishing the Practicum

- Conduct the activities described in the learning contract, including meeting with the faculty mentor.
- Complete and submit final products in [The Learning Contract System](#)
 - Students may upload deliverables via the same system to submit the learning contract.
 - To do so, students must first create the final product by selecting the product type and then uploading the file. Each file must be uploaded separately.
- Students **must** submit final products in their learning contract upon completion of the experience. This is where faculty mentors, the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement, and others associated with the university can review products and verify that they demonstrate attainment of competencies. Students are advised to submit final products by deadlines negotiated with the practicum team or by the last class day of the term. After completing the practicum, the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement verifies the submission of final products. Failure to submit final products may result in a grade change to incomplete (I) until they are submitted.
- Faculty mentors will review the deliverables, ensuring competencies are met, and quality is acceptable, and submit a final grade of pass (P), fail (F), or incomplete (I) in myUTH.
- Students should notify the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement and their faculty mentor if they cannot complete the practicum by the end of the semester.

Evaluating 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a practicum?

A practicum is a unique learning experience planned, supervised, evaluated, and graded. Practicum experiences allow students to apply classroom education to a real-world public health problem in a work setting. Each experience varies according to the student's interests and the preceptor's needs and must be mutually beneficial for the student and the community preceptor. Each practicum culminates in submitting two final products 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?

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?

A practicum is required for students enrolled in our professional degree programs. These include the Master in Public Health (MPH) and Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degrees.

Why is a practicum required?

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 by the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and anecdotal evidence from local meetings suggest employers prefer hiring graduates with tangible skills acquired through practice experience. Therefore, the practicum is an essential part of our curriculum.

Can MS and Ph.D. students enroll in practicum?

Yes, students in the Master of Science (MS) or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) 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?

Yes, MPH and DrPH students earn academic credit for completing a practicum. Students receive credit by enrolling and completing the academic course PH 9997 requirements. Generally, students earn one academic credit for about 60 hours of public health practice, and three PH 9997 credits may be applied toward their 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?

Yes, if permitted by your faculty advisor, you may have more than one practicum experience. However, remember that only three academic credits count toward your degree.

When should I begin planning my practicum?

It's best to start planning your practicum as soon as possible, even in the first year of the MPH program. It takes time to find a suitable placement, complete the necessary paperwork, enroll, and get started on the project. This is also true if you have a specific organization or location in mind. Just like a great job, practicum positions can be competitive. Networking and building relationships with potential supervisors early on are essential.

I want to enroll in Practicum next summer. Where can I find a Practicum host organization? Is there a list somewhere?

Practicum opportunities can be developed in multiple ways. Typically, students respond to postings on [Handshake](#) (or another job site such as [LinkedIn](#) or [Indeed](#)), ask for referrals from fellow students or professors, contact an organization they are interested in, or reach out to a public health professional they met through networking.

Once I find a practicum opportunity, how do I enroll?

You will receive an enrollment code via email from the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement after your faculty mentor and preceptor have approved your learning contract. The first step in this process is submitting the contract in [mySPH](#).

How long will the practicum experience take?

MPH students commit to a minimum of 180 contact hours for practicum. Arrangements vary by the host organization and project time frame. Most students who complete their practicum in a single term spend around 15-25 hours per week in practicum, depending on the term.

What credentials do practicum preceptors need to have?

The wide range of placements and preceptors reflect the scope of public health. Most importantly, your preceptor should provide mentorship in the areas you are interested in. Preceptors have diverse educational and professional backgrounds, expertise, qualifications, and credentials.

The organization I want to work with has asked if UTHouston School of Public Health requires an affiliation agreement. What do I tell them?

UTHouston School of Public Health does not require that practicum sites have an affiliation agreement with the school. If a site requires an affiliation agreement, please contact the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement at Practicum@uth.tmc.edu as soon as possible to start the process. Note that this may take several weeks.

Can my faculty mentor and my preceptor be the same person?

No. Your faculty mentor must be a current UTHouston SPH faculty member and can be searched by name or research interest [here](#).

Can a practicum fulfill the ILE requirement?

The practicum and the ILE are two different requirements for the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree. The practicum is a hands-on experience where students apply classroom learning to a real-world public health setting. An [Integrative Learning Experience \(ILE\)](#) demonstrates the synthesis of two foundational and two major competencies where the student produces a high-quality written product that is appropriate for their educational and professional goals.

What information about practicum must be kept confidential?

All information related to clients or patients of the host agency must be kept confidential. This includes information about their personal lives, health conditions, and treatment plans. Students should only correspond with or for clients regarding matters of a professional nature with explicit approval of the preceptor. Your preceptor and faculty mentor can offer additional guidance in this area. Note that some sites may require additional training and agreements around confidentiality.

What should students do if they experience harassment during practicum?

Harassment can take many forms, including verbal abuse, physical intimidation, and sexual harassment. It is essential to report harassment immediately to address and prevent it from happening again. First, make sure you are safe. Then you should immediately report any harassment of any form you might experience to your preceptor, faculty mentor, and the Office of Public Health Practice and Engagement. Students who've experienced harassment or other difficulties should contact the Assistant Dean for Students, [Dr. Mary Ann Smith](#).

How is the practicum course assessed?

Practicum is a pass/fail course. The grade is given by the faculty mentor after they have reviewed the final products and feedback from the preceptor.

What should I do if my practicum does not go according to plan, or if I will not finish my deliverables by the end of the term?

We understand that things may change during the course of your practicum experience. Students are able to modify contract details like competencies and deliverables, end dates, hours per week, etc. If you will not finish in time to receive a grade, consult with your faculty mentor about taking an [Incomplete](#).

What if I have more questions?

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.

Appendix

Resources are available to students throughout their academic career as a School of Public Health students. 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.

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

Students must select five competencies. MPH students must choose at least three of the five required competencies from the MPH Foundational Knowledge Competencies. The remaining two competencies can be Major-Specific or additional Foundational Competencies.

MPH Foundational Competencies (select at least three) and Example Products:

Competency	Examples of acceptable products
MPH-1: Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A proposal that benefits the organization that includes a methods section. ▪ A literature review relevant to the practicum organization. ▪ An evaluation plan for a program conducted by the practicum organization.
MPH-2: Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A proposal for the organization that includes quantitative or qualitative data collection methods. ▪ An organization or program evaluation plan that includes data collection plans.
MPH-3: Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate.	A paper or presentation that includes the analysis and results sections. The product must demonstrate that the student analyzed quantitative or qualitative data.
MPH-4: Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A paper or presentation that includes a results and conclusion section. ▪ A literature review that includes evidence tables of data analysis results.
MPH-5: Compare the organization, structure, and function of health care, public health, and regulatory systems across national and international settings.	A paper that compares your practicum site's organization, structure, and function with similar organizations across various settings.
MPH-6: Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community, and societal levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A paper discussing how structural bias, social inequities, and racism impact health equity. ▪ An equity audit of a local health department or school district
MPH-7: Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health.	A needs assessment of the practicum organization or the population they serve.
MPH-8: Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implement public health policies or programs.	A paper describing how cultural values and practices are incorporated into organizational programs, policies, or practices.
MPH-9: Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention.	A paper describing the design of a population based-policy, program, or intervention with evidence to support the innovation or policy.
MPH-10: Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management.	A business plan or proposal for resource allocation or management of an existing or new proposal.
MPH-11: Select methods to evaluate public health programs.	An evaluation plan of a new or existing program associated with the practicum organization.

Competency	Examples of acceptable products
MPH-12: Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A policy brief delineates the methodology used to develop the proposed policy, including the role of ethics and evidence.
MPH-13: Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A proposal to increase stakeholder involvement or build coalitions to support the organization or program.
MPH-14: Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs to improve health in diverse populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters, editorials, or other written materials that advocate for policy change.
MPH-15: Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An impact evaluation of a policy that impacts the organization.
MPH-16: Apply principles of leadership, governance, and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration, and guiding decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A strategic plan that includes vision, mission, decision-making guidance, and empowering and influencing stakeholders.
MPH-17: Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges.	<p><i>This competency cannot be validated in a written product and cannot be selected.</i></p>
MPH-18: Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An analysis of the pros and cons of various communication strategies for various audiences for the practicum organization.
MPH-19: Communicate audience-appropriate public health content in writing and through oral presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This criterion can be met by sharing information in writing and orally.
MPH-20: Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A communication plan that incorporates cultural competence principles.
MPH-21: Perform effectively on interprofessional teams.	<p><i>This competency cannot be validated in a written product and cannot be selected.</i></p>
MPH-22: Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A written product incorporating systems thinking tools into understanding a public health issue relevant to the organization.

MPH Major-Specific Competencies and Example Products:

Competency	Examples of acceptable products
Biostatistics Competencies	
MS-B1. Use appropriate statistical methods and models to analyze public health, biomedical, or bioinformatics data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A report resulting from a data analysis
MS-B2. Demonstrate the correct use of probability distributions and theory of statistical inference within biostatistics and public health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A report demonstrating the correct use of probability distributions and statistical inference
MS-B3. Outline a statistical analysis strategy to answer a research question appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A statistical methods section for a proposal
MS-B4. Use multiple statistical software packages to analyze data to answer public health research questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An article about using multiple statistical packages
Environmental Health Competencies	
MPH-O1. Conduct a risk characterization of an environmental hazard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A paper describing the risk characterization of an environmental hazard relevant to the preceptor organization
MPH-O2. Critically evaluate information and data in the peer-reviewed literature related to environmental health sciences, considering the quality and suitability of literature and data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An evidence-based literature review related to an environmental science issue of interest to the practicum organization
MPH-O3. Describe regulatory programs, including effectiveness, in the context of legislative authorities that deal with environmental health issues at the local, state, federal, or international levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A literature review of regulations impacting the practicum organization and their effectiveness in addressing an environmental health issue
MPH-O4. Evaluate the function, structure, and financing of environmental programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An evaluation of the function, structure, and financing of environmental programs related to the practicum organization.
MPH-O5. Demonstrate effective risk communication that incorporates the principles of risk perception.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication materials that demonstrate effective risk communication
Epidemiology Competencies	
MPH-E1. Apply data collection and data management skills for an epidemiologic study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A data collection and data management manual of procedure.
MPH-E2. Demonstrate the application of epidemiology for informing etiologic research, public health surveillance, or screening programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A literature review of epidemiologic research that is relevant to the practicum organization
MPH-E3. Evaluate a public health problem in magnitude, person, place and time, and exposure-outcome relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A literature review of epidemiologic research ▪ Data analysis and results section of data collected by the practicum organization
MPH-E4. Apply basic ethical principles about the collection and management of epidemiologic information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manual of procedures that includes basic ethical principles
MPH-E5. Appropriately interpret measures of disease frequency and association, taking into account the impact of bias and error on results and conclusions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Literature review and evidence tables of disease outcomes of interest to the practicum organization
Health Promotion/Health Education Competencies	
MPH-H1. Conduct a needs assessment with stakeholders to address a public health issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A needs assessment useful to the practicum organization in collaboration with stakeholders.

Competency	Examples of acceptable products
MPH-H2. Explain how social or behavioral sciences theories are operationalized in health promotion interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A paper analyzing how social or behavioral science theories are incorporated into programs or interventions delivered by the practicum organization ▪ A paper proposing how social or behavioral science theories can be incorporated into interventions or programs delivered by the practicum organization.
MPH-H3. Apply a systematic planning framework to plan a theory and evidence-based health promotion intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A paper applying intervention mapping to plan an intervention for the practicum organization.
MPH-H4. Apply a systematic planning framework to plan the adoption and implementation of a health promotion intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A paper applying intervention mapping to plan the adoption and implementation of a health promotion intervention that the practicum organization could use.
MPH-H5 Describe a plan to evaluate a health promotion intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A written plan to evaluate a program or intervention delivered by the practicum organization.
Health Promotion/Health Education– Dietetic Internship Competencies	
MPH-DI1. Use the Evidence Analyses Process (EAP) to review a nutrition topic and develop a nutrition-focused public health intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A training using the EAP to review a nutrition topic. ▪ A written paper that describes a nutrition-focused public health intervention based on an EAP review.
MPH-DI2. Develop a public health nutrition intervention activity based on community nutrition-related needs, assets, and capacities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A written paper describing needs, assets, and capacities that lead to developing a public health nutrition intervention activity.
MPH-DI3. Communicate patient or client cases using professional nutrition standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A paper or presentation communicating patient or client cases using professional nutrition standards.
MPH-DI4. Demonstrate the ability to conduct nutrition-focused physical assessments.	<i>This competency cannot be validated in a written product and cannot be selected.</i>
MPH-DI5. Implement evidence and theory-based nutrition interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A written analysis describing how evidence and theory-based nutrition interventions were implemented.
Community Health Practice Competencies	
MPH-C1. Compare and contrast program-planning models used by public health organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A paper that compares and contrasts program planning models used by the host organization.
MPH-C2. Describe the interconnectedness of governmental and non-profit systems in influencing a public health problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A paper detailing a public health problem of interest to the host organization
MPH-C3. Collaborate with community-based organizations on social justice initiatives to enhance self-reflection when working with diverse communities	<i>This competency cannot be validated in a written product and cannot be selected.</i>
MPH-C4. Examine the role of leadership in public health practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A theory-based analysis of leadership skills used within the practicum organization
MPH-C5. Illustrate how the mechanisms and pathways through which economic or social determinants affect health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A logic model and written description that illustrates the social and economic factors affecting a health issue of interest to the organization
Healthcare Management Competencies	
MPH-M1. Team Leadership: Collaborates with others to complete team-based assignments within healthcare organizations, adapting when needed to maximize organizational and personal success.	<i>This competency cannot be validated in a written product and cannot be selected.</i>
MPH-M2. Strategic Orientation: Synthesizes organizational opportunities and challenges and defends strategies for organizational success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A SWOT analysis that includes a written justification.

Competency	Examples of acceptable products
MPH-M3. Analytical Thinking: Evaluates and analyzes quality, safety, and financial performance measures to support managerial decision-making in healthcare organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A proposal of evidence-based measures useful to the organization to support decision-making.
MPH-M4. Ethics & Professionalism: Synthesizes knowledge and skills needed to excel professionally with high ethical standards and uses these skills while making a meaningful contribution to the field.	<i>This competency cannot be validated in a written product and cannot be selected.</i>
MPH-M5. Organizational Management: Selects, integrates, and evaluates organizational resources to provide high-quality customer-oriented health services responsive to the ever-changing political landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An evaluation of organizational resources.
Health Services Organization Competencies	
MPH-S1. Demonstrate understanding of microeconomic theory in a market system and how to apply those concepts to understand the economics of the healthcare system and market failure in the US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A written paper investigating how the practicum site is impacted by microeconomic theory
MPH-S2. Review and critically evaluate scientific studies that estimate health policy alternatives' effectiveness, efficiency, and equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A literature review that explores the EEE of health policies affecting the practicum site
MPH-S3. Prepare a detailed policy analysis plan to assess alternative policies for improving health services' effectiveness, efficiency, and equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A policy analysis for improving effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of organizational services
MPH-S4. Describe the internal and external validity strengths and limitations of health policy evaluations and the degree to which results are useful to decision-makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A proposal of a policy evaluation useful to the host site that includes the internal and external validity strengths and limitations
MPH-S5. Critically evaluate peer-reviewed published health economics or health services research manuscripts to identify potential study questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A literature review to identify a study question of interest to the host site

Example Skillsets and Deliverables by Major/Program

Department of Epidemiology, Human Genetics, and Environmental Sciences

Master of Public Health (MPH)	Environmental Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct risk characterization • Describe the effectiveness of regulatory programs • Evaluate the function, structure, and financing of environmental programs 	
Master of Public Health (MPH)	Environmental Sciences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply data collection and management skills • Evaluate the problem in terms of magnitude, person, and time • Appropriately interpret measures of disease frequency and association 	

Department of Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences

Master of Public Health (MPH)	Health Promotion/Health Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct needs assessment • Apply a systematic planning framework • Describe a place to evaluate a health promotion intervention 	
Master of Public Health (MPH)	Health Promotion/Health Education -Dietetic Internship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use EAP to review a nutrition topic • Develop a public health nutrition intervention based on community needs • Communicate patient cases using professional nutrition standards 	

Department of Management, Policy, and Community Health

Master of Public Health (MPH)	Community Health Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast program planning models • Collaborate with community organizations on social justice initiatives • Examine the role of leadership in public health 	
Master of Public Health (MPH)	Health Services Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a detailed policy analysis to assess alternative policies • Describe internal and external validity strengths and limitations of health policy evaluations • Understand and apply microeconomic theory in the market system 	
Master of Public Health (MPH)	Healthcare Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and analyze quality, safety, and financial performance measures • Synthesizes organization opportunities and challenges • Selects, integrates, and evaluates organizational resources 	

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

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