

Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health

PRACTICUM ORIENTATION

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MPH Degree Program

- At a minimum, the MPH degree program
 - *“shall assure that each student acquires skills and experience in the application of basic public health concepts and of specialty knowledge to the solution of community health problems.”*
 - The practicum is a primary mechanism for acquiring these practice-based skills and experiences
 - Longitudinal, community-based experience

What is the MPH Practicum?

- According to Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the MPH practicum is
 - *“a planned, supervised and evaluated experience...”*
 - *considered a very important component of a public health professional degree program...*
 - *To be arranged in cooperation with as wide a range of community agencies [Public Health] as possible...”*
 - *Local, state, regional, national, and/or international agencies*

Goals of MPH Practicum

- To place students who have mastered knowledge, skills and abilities required of contemporary public health professionals in a practice, field-based situation
- To provide an opportunity for the student “to bridge theory to practice”

Student Learning Outcomes

Currently Being Refined
(Spring Semester 2008)

- Contribute to the public health profession through the practice of sound public health attitudes, values, concepts, and ethics.
- Appreciate and facilitate diversity of thought, culture, gender, and ethnicity through inter-professional communication and collaboration.
- Participate in professional development, research, service, and educational activities that contribute to the knowledge base and service outreach of public health.
- Demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills in the core public health discipline specific areas.

Philosophical Framework of the Practicum

- The practicum experience is an opportunity for students to gain practical experience in the core functions of public health (assessment, policy development, assurance)
 - The core functions of public health practice are embodied in ten essential public health services
- As such, the ten essential public health services should serve as the framework for developing expanded learning objectives (*ie – experiences*) unique to the practicum experience

Ten Essential Public Health Services

- Monitor health status to identify community health problems;
 - *Eg: Conduct community health assessment to identify public health risk*
- Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community;
 - *Eg: Investigate foodborne outbreaks*
- Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues;
 - *Eg: Provide health information that is easy for people to get and understand*
- Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems;
 - *Eg: Convene other health organizations within community to develop a community-wide health improvement plan*
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts;
 - *Eg: Advocate for policies that will improve public health*

Ten Essential Public Health Services

- Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety;
 - *Eg: Enforce public health code*
- Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable;
 - *Eg: Establish and maintain a referral network for provision of personal health services to ensure that people who cannot afford health care get the care they need*
- Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce;
 - *Eg: Fund professional development opportunities for staff*
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services;
 - *Eg: Monitor trends in disease rates to assess effectiveness of disease prevention activities*
- Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.
 - *Eg: Monitor rapidly changing disease prevention research and health promotion research*

Minimum Requirements

- The Practicum experience is longitudinal and requires a minimum of 300-hours in a community-based setting (3 semester credit hours)
- As a general rule, this translates into:
 - Twenty hours/week for fifteen weeks (Spring and Fall)
 - Twenty five hours/week for twelve weeks (Summer)
- It is recognized that some variation may exist with respect to exact number of hours per week at the site
 - Sites hours of operation
 - Student's current life circumstances (family; job)

HOWEVER...

- The JPHCOPH is committed to implementing the most flexible operational model without sacrificing...

- Faculty and student expectations

OR

- Public health competency requirements

Roles & Responsibilities

Student Responsibility to the JPHCOPH

- To identify potential practicum sites congruent with the current program of study.
 - *It is recommended students begin this process no later than the first semester of the second year of study.*
- To complete all pre-practicum and post-practicum arrangements as described in the MPH manual.
- To participate in periodically scheduled progress review meetings with the preceptor site supervisor and the Office of Public Health Practice (OPHP).

Student Responsibility to the JPHCOPH

- To represent the JPHCOPH as a student of Georgia Southern University in a professional and respectful manner.
- To maintain a line of communication with the OPHP.
- To maintain an electronic, professional portfolio of learning experiences in the MPH program in preparation for the culminating experience.

Student Responsibility to the Practicum Site

- To accept and complete all assignments and responsibilities as outlined by the practicum site.
- To consider him/herself a co-worker with the practicum organization's staff, and not someone due special privileges.
- To accept the practicum organization's philosophy, methods, leadership, and operation.
- To offer suggestions for programmatic improvement, when appropriate.

Student Responsibility to the Practicum Site

- To seek advice and consult with the Site Supervisor when confronted with problems he/she cannot satisfactorily solve alone.
- To clearly understand the expectations of the practicum organization and accept responsibility for behavior regarding punctuality, dress, and professionalism.
- To become a productive and contributing member of the practicum organization's programs.

Practicum Site Supervisor's Responsibility to the JPHCOPH

- To provide information about the organization and the experiences that can be afforded a student in a practicum.
- To maintain periodic contact with the OPHP and faculty advisor concerning student performance.
- To provide a fair and objective evaluation of student performance during the practicum experience.
- To provide knowledge, skills, and abilities about the MPH students to the OPHP.

Practicum Site Supervisor's Responsibility to the Student

- To recognize that the student is in the process of learning and not to have unrealistic expectations.
- To provide the student an opportunity for a broad, well-rounded experience in terms of responsibilities, programs and services.
- To confer with the student to determine his/her responsibilities during the experience and to adequately orient the student to the site.

Practicum Site Supervisor's Responsibility to the Student

- To provide the student the opportunity for successful experiences that will promote professional growth.
- To encourage the highest standards of performance and give constructive and objective evaluation of student performance.
- To jointly set practicum learning objectives with the Student.

JPHCOPH Responsibilities to the Student

- To assist the student in locating an acceptable practicum site through consultation with the OPHP and the Faculty Advisor.
- To assist the student in developing acceptable learning objectives for the practicum experience.
- To review and evaluate student written assignments.
- To initiate the “Memorandum of Understanding” through the Office of Legal Affairs.
 - The MOU establishes a formal agreement between the University and the proposed practicum site.

JPHCOPH Responsibilities to the Student

- To regularly confer with the student and site supervisor by means of phone, fax, site visits, e-mail, etc. throughout the semester.
- To determine the final grade for the student by combining the JPHCOPH and site supervisor's evaluations.
- To resolve conflicts related to the practicum.

JPHCOPH Responsibility to the Practicum Site

- To maintain open communication at all times with the practicum organization, particularly with regard to issues concerning their cooperation and supervision of the practicum.
- Integrate feedback into programs, courses, research, and services activities of the college.

Practicum Site Selection

Points to Ponder

Key Points to Ponder

● **FIRST AND FOREMOST!!!!**

- It is your responsibility to identify and secure an acceptable Practicum location

In Case You Missed It

Key Points to Ponder

- It is your responsibility to identify and secure an acceptable Practicum location

Key Points to Ponder

- Although the student is responsible for identifying a practicum site, the OPHP will work with the student (and the faculty advisor) to facilitate identification of potential sites.

– **HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD HAVE:**

- A general idea of geographic preference
- A general idea of the type of experience you desire
 - *This is usually achieved after an in-depth discussion with your faculty advisor*

IN FACT...

- I prefer to hold initial discussions of practicum opportunities while your faculty advisor is present.

- For example, “I don’t necessarily know what constitutes a GREAT (or even good) experience for an environmental health student.”

Key Points to Ponder

- The University DOES NOT recognize a student experience that takes place at a site unless a “University Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)” is activated.
 - Office of Legal Affairs
 - Request to Establish/Renew a MOU

Key Points to Ponder

- The process of identifying and securing an appropriate site may be lengthy.
 - Begin the search early so time is afforded to complete the preliminary requirements.
 - It is strongly recommended that you begin to seriously investigate potential sites no later than the end your first year of enrollment.
- Cast a broad net when seeking a practicum.
 - Do not celebrate success too early
 - “A site acceptable to YOU doesn’t necessarily imply that YOU are acceptable to the site”

Key Points to Ponder

- The process of identifying and securing an appropriate site requires approval from your faculty advisor.
 - The proposed site must allow for a range of public health practicum experiences.
 - The specific educational experience is dictated, to a large extent, by the student's program of study.
 - However, the student is strongly encouraged to seek a placement experience congruent with his or her personal and professional goals.

Possible Practicum Sites

- Federal Public Health Agencies
- State Public Health Agencies
- Local Health Departments with a Population-Based Focus
- Local Health and Social Service Agencies
- Health-Related Consulting Firms
- Managed Care Organizations Providing Appropriate Experiences
- Community Health Centers/Clinics with an Appropriate Focus
- Migrant Health Clinics with an Appropriate Focus
- Hospitals Providing Appropriate Experiences
- Environmental Health Consulting Companies
- Industry Providing Appropriate Experiences

Resources for Finding a Practicum

- Peers
- Faculty
- Existing Networks
- Office of Public Health Practice (OPHP)
- Office of Legal Affairs
http://services.georgiasouthern.edu/legal/clinical_index.php

Practicum Evaluation

Components of the Evaluation Process

- Evaluation of the Practicum experience will involve a structured and unstructured process.
 - Structured evaluation will be conducted according to a standardized template using mid-term and final evaluation surveys.
 - Structured evaluation will also involve a review of weekly student activity.
 - Unstructured evaluation will be an on-going assessment of student performance at the practicum site based on periodic follow-up with the site supervisor

Weighting Scheme

- Site Supervisor Mid-Term Evaluation 45%
- Site Supervisor Final Evaluation 45%
- Weekly Log Forms 10%

Checklist

Prior to the Practicum

- Schedule a meeting with the OPHP to discuss the Practicum expectations.
 - Orientation
 - One-on-one (if applicable)

- Complete the Practicum Application Form.
 - No later than the 2nd semester of enrollment

- Locate an acceptable practicum site.
 - Peers
 - Faculty
 - Existing Networks
 - OPHP
 - Office of Legal Affairs

- Complete and submit all required forms to the Office of Public Health Practice.
 - Practicum Site Description Form
 - Employer Verification of Practicum Requirements
 - JPHCOPH Memorandum of Understanding
 - Verification of Health Insurance
 - Verification of Professional Liability Coverage
 - Off-Campus Student Participation Agreement
 - Practicum Objectives Worksheet

- Monitor the status of the University Memorandum of Understanding.
- Verify final approval of Practicum placement through the OPHP.

Checklist

After Initiating the Practicum

- Modify and resubmit the Practicum Objectives Worksheet.
 - If applicable

- Complete and submit all required Practicum Weekly Log Forms to the OPHP
 - At the end of every three weeks of the Practicum.

- Ensure the site supervisor administers the student evaluations forwards the completed evaluations to the OPHP.
 - Mid-term Evaluation
 - Final Evaluation

After Initiating the Experience

- Ensure the site supervisor completes the Site Supervisor Practicum Exit Survey and forwards the completed survey to the OPHP.
- Complete and submit the Student Exit Evaluation Survey to the OPHP.

Required Practicum Forms

Submitted to the OPHP

Practicum Application Form

Due: No later than the 2nd semester of enrollment

Page 23

To be completed by the student and the faculty advisor

Practicum Site Description Form

Due: No later than two semesters before the practicum

Pages 24 – 25

To be completed by the Site Supervisor

Employer Verification of Practicum Requirements (If Applicable)

Due: No later than one semester before the practicum

Pages 26 – 28

To be completed by the student

To be completed by the employer (if applicable)

To be approved by the faculty advisor and OPHP

JPHCOPH Memorandum of Understanding

Due: No later than one semester before the practicum

Page 29

To be completed by the student and routed to the site supervisor and faculty advisor for approval

Verification of Health Insurance Coverage

Due: No later than one semester before the practicum

Page 30

To be completed and signed by the student*

To be witnessed (by someone of legal age)

*A copy of the declaration of insurance form must be attached

Health Insurance

- The university mandates that all Graduate Assistants carry health insurance.
- Students who do not have health insurance may be covered under their guardian's policy.
- Students not covered under a guardian's policy must seek health insurance elsewhere.
 - Pearce and Pearce, Inc. – Student Insurance Specialists
<https://www.pearceandpearce.com//PearceSite/Schools/GA/gsou/Default.asp>

Verification of Professional Liability Coverage

Due: No later than one semester before the practicum

Page 31

To be completed and signed by the student*

To be witnessed (by someone of legal age)

*A copy of the declaration of liability insurance must be attached

Professional Liability

- Students may choose any reputable liability firm, but the amount of coverage must be acceptable to the Practicum site.
 - \$1,000,000 general liability (as a general rule)
- The resources below are examples of organizations providing previous students with professional liability coverage.

www.proliability.com

www.ftj.com

Off-Campus Student Participation Agreement

Due: No later than one semester before the practicum

Page 32

To be completed and signed by the student

To be witnessed (by someone of legal age)

Practicum Objectives Worksheet

Draft Due: No later than one semester before the practicum

Page 33

To be completed and signed by the student and site supervisor

To be approved by the faculty advisor

Evaluations and Exit Surveys

Due: No later than mid-semester or end-of-semester

Pages 34 - 39

Practicum Weekly Log Form

At the end of every 3 week cycle

Page 40

To be completed by the student

To be verified by the site supervisor

Questions?