***GWSPH Practicum FAQ***

***Preceptor***

**What is a Practicum vs an Applied Practice Experience?**

*Here at GW, the term Applied Practice Experience (APEx) is used as the umbrella term for two pathways- Practicum and Expediated Portfolio Review.*

*A Practicum is an internship, volunteer or work experience that a student can apply learnings from their MPH program towards and/or learn skills that build upon their MPH learnings and could receive academic credit for.*

*Here at GWSPH, a Practicum is one of two pathways a student can meet our Applied Practice Experience. A practicum consists of a pre-planned and approved practicum site and preceptor (supervisor), a practicum plan that includes three foundational competencies and two program specific competencies, a minimum of 120* ***PROSPECTIVE*** *hours, use of the schools Practicum Tracking System, a midpoint and final evaluation completed by both the student and preceptor, and two work products.*

**What are these competencies and how do I know that my student can apply or attain them at my site?**

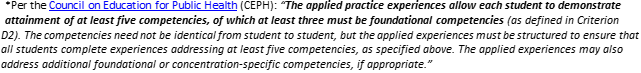
*All accredited schools of public health must adhere to a list of 22 foundational MPH competencies and each department and some programs have their own subset of competencies that measure student’s knowledge and skills within the public health field.*

*For the Practicum, three foundational competencies are to be selected and two program-specific. When reviewing a job description, scope of work, terms of reference, or a list of tasks and responsibilities, students should compare the descriptions against the below list of competencies. You, the preceptor, will work with your student to identify activities that apply to the student’s school and program-specific competencies.*

*Can you see a clear connection between the student’s tasks and responsibilities to the competencies? (Ex. Is the student conducting a quantitative analysis and will they be a part of the team selecting a methodology?) Is there a competency that measures this?  If students are unsure about which competencies would be met at a potential site, they can share the SOW/TTR/job description with their Practicum Team and they will confirm.*

**CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies**

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| --- |
| **Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health** |
| 1. Apply epidemiological methods to settings and situations in public health practice 2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context 3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate 4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice |
| **Public Health & Health Care Systems** |
| 1. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings 2. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and systemic levels |
| **Planning & Management to Promote Health** |
| 1. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities’ health 2. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs 3. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention 4. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management 5. Select methods to evaluate public health programs |
| **Policy in Public Health** |
| 1. Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence 2. Propose strategies to identify relevant communities and individuals and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes 3. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations 4. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity |
| **Leadership** |
| 1. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue 2. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges |
| **Communication** |
| 1. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors 2. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation to a non-academic, non-peer audience with attention to factors such as literacy and health literacy 3. Describe the importance of cultural humility in communicating public health content Interprofessional Practice 4. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health |
| **Systems Thinking** |
| 1. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative |



**What do Preceptors do?**

*A preceptor is someone who will guide and mentor a student while they are completing their practicum experience at the site.*

*Your primary responsibilities are to:*

* *Review the GWSPH* [*Preceptor Practicum*](https://publichealth.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs4586/files/2024-08/gwsph_mph_preceptor_practicum_guidebook_2024-2025.pdf) *Guidebook and the* [*Handshake Preceptor’s User Manual*](https://gwu.app.box.com/file/1218509549808?s=7u8pdi6z7svcjmlh7487eos1m271nql9)
* *Review and approve a student’s APEx Proposal*
* *Complete the Oversight Endorsement Form*
* *Engage with the student on site and provide constructive feedback and guidance including but not limited to skill acquisition and professional conduct*
* *Complete the following:*
  + *Practicum Plan Review/Approval*
  + *Final Site Preceptor Evaluation*
* *Negotiate payment or stipend with the student, if applicable*
* *Support the student to connect with your organizations HR team to be able to apply their Accommodations at the site, if applicable*
* *Address any reports of concerns including but not limited to site safety issues and/or sexual harassment*

**My organization requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), an Affiliation Agreement (AA), or the like for students. How should I go about facilitating one?**

*Please advise your student that this documentation is required before they can start their Practicum at your site. To expediate the process, it’s recommended to use the GWSPH template, however if your organization requires the use of their own template please share this template with the student. The student will receive a copy of the GWSPH template from their Practice Team and Office of Applied Public Health team and share it with you to complete. Once the form has been completed by the practice partner site then the student will submit the form to the OAPH who will liaise between the contract's teams and the site. All contractual agreements are reviewed by the University Office of General Counsel (OGC) and may require a number of additional weeks or months for full execution.*

**My organization requires additional screening for student workers. Is GW involved in this process?**

*GWSPH is not responsible for student background checks, drug testing, immunization records, or other screening requirements. If your organization requires this type of verification as part of the hiring process, it is imperative that the preceptor discusses this with the student early and directly.*

**What is an APEx proposal?**

*The APEx proposal outlines the student’s practicum experiences activities, time commitment, preceptor’s commitment, competencies, and deliverables.*

*Within the APEx Proposal, students will need to demonstrate:*

1. *How they will attain the required 5 competencies.*
2. *How the work they will complete is prospective.*
3. *How the work will be accomplished (i.e. activities) in 120+ hours of direct or indirect labor.*
4. *How the work will benefit the Practicum site and/or the clients that the site serves.*
5. *How the work will result in at least 2 work products that demonstrate and allow assessment of their competency attainment.*
6. *An attestation that they will not work outside their approved Scope of Work (SoW).*

**What is the preceptor’s role in the approval process for the Practicum?**

*Following securing a practicum, the preceptor will complete the following steps:*

1. *Your student will submit a Scope of Work/APEx Proposal in Handshake.*
2. *You will be the first to review and approve the student’s APEx proposal. You will receive an e-mail from Handshake with a link to review the student’s APEx Proposal. (Keep in mind that preceptors DO NOT get log-ins for Handshake and that any links sent by Handshake won’t expire, but try to use them as soon as possible.)*
3. *Your student’s Practicum Advisor will be the last to review and approve the student’s APEx proposal.*
4. *During step 2, the preceptor will complete the Oversight Endorsement Form to ensure that the both the preceptor, the Practicum Director, and the student agree on the project’s purpose, the student’s activities, and the student’s permissions.*

**How long is the approval process?**

*The full approval process can take 2-4 weeks to complete before students are allowed to begin logging any practicum hours. However, this process can take longer if an agreement is required before the student can start the experience. Any hours that are worked prior to that approval* **CANNOT** *count towards the 120-hour requirement. Your student should keep you updated on the status of their Practicum approval so that you are both on the same page about when they will start engaging with your site and begin logging hours.*

**How do I know when my student is approved to begin logging hours?**

*After a student has submitted their APEx proposal and signed Endorsement form to the Office of Research Excellence, students should expect 7-10 working days to receive a Determination Email. This email will inform a student if they are allowed to proceed with their practicum experience or if the student is required to proceed through the official IRB at GW. Your student will inform you that they have been approved and can begin logging hours.*

**How will my student log their hours?**

*When students are working, they are not required to log their hours. However, sites/preceptors can request that a student logs their hours. If you wish to review your student’s hours or have them log them, please communicate this with your student.*

**How do I know when it is time to complete the Final Evaluation?**

*Once your student completes all* ***120 HOURS*** *of their Practicum experience and finishes their Practicum deliverables, they will complete their own version of the Final Evaluation in Handshake. Once they submit it, you will then be prompted via e-mail to complete your own Final Evaluation by clicking on the provided link and filling in the needed information and reflection questions in Handshake. Please refer to the* [*Handshake Preceptor Manual*](https://publichealth.gwu.edu/preceptor-resources) *for more detailed instructions with visual aids to help guide you.*

**What about Practicums abroad?**

*The process for international practicums can add another month to the Practicum approval process. Students are required to first receive approval on their practicum plan at their department level and through GWU’s Office of International Programs. All international travel for students related to academic work must be registered with the Office of International Programs a minimum of 30 days prior to travel.*

**I would like to update the preceptor information that GWSPH currently has on record for my organization. How do I do this?**

*If you would like to change the name and/or contact information of a preceptor or add a new preceptor from your organization to GWSPH’s Preceptor Database, please provide your name, email address, organization phone number, and organization address in an email to sphprac@gwu.edu.*

***Practicum Tracking System***

**How do I know when my student has forms pending approval?**

*Preceptors will receive emails from Handshake when a form is pending their review.*

**How do I create a Handshake account?**

*GWSPH Practicum Preceptors do not need to create an account on Handshake. Instead, you will receive emails from Handshake with any items you need to complete.*

**What forms do I have to submit through Handshake?**

***\*NOTE:*** *Preceptors should refer to the* [*Preceptor Handshake Manual*](https://gwu.app.box.com/file/1218509549808?s=7u8pdi6z7svcjmlh7487eos1m271nql9) *for an in-depth overview of the Handshake process including visuals and additional description.*

*As a Preceptor, you will have to navigate through Handshake only twice – once to approve the Practicum Plan and at the end of the experience to evaluate the student in a Final Evaluation survey. This is a required component of the Practicum and students will not receive credit for their Practicum until you have completed the following:*

* *Review and approve your student’s Practicum Plan.*
  + *While reviewing the Practicum Plan, fill out a Preceptor Endorsement Form (if applicable)*
* *Complete a Final Evaluation of the student.*

**How do I review a student’s Practicum Plan in Handshake?**

*Shortly after your student submits a Practicum Plan within Handshake, you will receive an email from Handshake with a subject line:* ***Experience Requested by [student name].*** *In order to review the student’s plan, please complete the following steps:*

* *Select the blue “Review Experiences Request” button embedded in the email.*
  + ***\*NOTE:*** *The blue button remains active for 15 business days and will continue to be a live link even after you have reviewed and approved the student’s plan.*
* *When you select the blue button, a new webpage will open.*
  + ***\*NOTE:*** *If you have a pop-up blocker on, this may prevent you from seeing the Practicum Plan to review.*
* *There are five pages for you to review*
  + *Job details*
  + *Experience Details*
    - ***\*NOTE:*** *Under the “Experience Details” page, there are attachments for you to download as reference such as a Preceptor Guidebook and Handshake manual.*
      * ***IF*** *the following form is present under the “Attachments” section, take the appropriate steps as outlined below:*
        + *A) Student Project Oversight Endorsement Form – download this form and complete all questions before returning it back to your GWSPH student via email.*
  + *Student survey*
  + *Your survey*
  + *Your response*
* *Once you have finished all components, you will then be prompted to Decline or Approve the Requested Experience.* ***\*NOTE:*** *If you decide to Decline the experience, please contact your student and explain the necessary changes that need to be made to the plan to allow them to edit and resubmit.*
* *A “Thank you!” banner will appear when the submission is successful.*

**Why am I completing a questionnaire about the type of data the student will be using?**

*All GWSPH MPH students who are completing a Practicum must have their Practicum Plan reviewed by the GWSPH Office of Research Excellence (ORE) to determine whether or not the project constitutes Human Subjects Research. In order to do this, students must submit their Practicum Plan in addition to an Endorsement Form from their Preceptor (if applicable) to the GWSPH Student Project Oversight Portal. In the Endorsement Form, Preceptors are asked to verify that the proposed Practicum project work plan is in line with ORE requirements.*

**How will the student know once I have approved their Practicum Plan?**

*The Practicum Plan is first reviewed by the Preceptor and is again reviewed by the student’s GWSPH Practice Team. After both you and your student’s Practice Team have approved their Practicum Plan, students will receive an email notifying them.*

**I can’t find the Handshake notification email even though the student said it was sent, what do I do?**

*If you do not receive an email from Handshake prompting you to review a student’s Practicum Plan or Final Evaluation, please email* [*sphprac@gwu.edu*](mailto:sphprac@gwu.edu) *with your student in CC. We will do our best to troubleshoot for you or bring in the Handshake support team to resolve the issue.*

**The link/button in the notification email is not working, how do I fix this?**

*If you experience difficulties with the link/button, please email* [*sphprac@gwu.edu*](mailto:sphprac@gwu.edu) *with your student in CC. We will do our best to troubleshoot for you or bring in the Handshake support team to resolve the issue.*

**Do I have to review a student’s hours/timesheet in Handshake?**

*Timesheets are optional. It is up to the preceptor if they want their student to log hours or if the student wants to log hours on their own. In Handshake, there is a timesheet template under the student’s profile that they can use. Student’s may also use a template provided to them by their Practicum site, if there is one.*

**The student completed all of their Practicum hours, now what?**

*Once your student has completed all of their hours, you will need to complete your Final Evaluation of your student in Handshake.*

**How do I submit a Final Evaluation of the student in Handshake?**

*Once your student concludes their time at your organization, you will receive an email from Handshake with a subject line: Experience Final Evaluation [student name]. In order to complete the Final Evaluation, please complete the following steps:*

* *Select the blue “Take Final Survey” button embedded in the email.*
* *Complete all three pages of the survey, using the blue “Next Page” button to proceed to all the pages before selecting the green “Submit Evaluation” button*
* *A green “Thank you!” banner will appear when the submission is successful.*