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1. Introduction
Thank you for your interest in mentoring and facilitating a practice experience (Practicum) for an MPH student!

The Practicum is a partnership among Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH) students, The George Washington University as represented by your department’s Practicum Director/Advisor (PD), and sponsoring agencies/organizations as represented by the Site Preceptor. Each party in this mutually beneficial relationship assumes certain responsibilities, performs specific functions, and accrues benefits. The Practicum is guided by a set of goals and objectives, which are based on the needs and resources of all parties involved.

As a requirement established by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), a practice is required for all degree-seeking students enrolled at an accredited school of public health, accreditation Criterion 2.4 states,

“All graduate professional public health degree students must develop skills in basic public health concepts and demonstrate the application of these concepts through a practice experience that is relevant to the students’ areas of specialization.” (CEPH, 2011)

CEPH further interprets this criterion by stating,

“Practical knowledge and skills are essential to successful practice. A planned, supervised and evaluated practice experience is an essential component of a professional public health degree program. These opportunities can take place in a variety of agencies and organizations and should include local and state public health agencies to the extent possible and appropriate. Opportunities may also include those in appropriate local, state, national, and international non-governmental agencies and organizations. An essential component of the practice experience is supervision by a preceptor qualified to evaluate the professional competence of the student. Schools must have well-defined learning objectives, procedures, and criteria for evaluation of the practice experience.” (CEPH, 2011)

Per these requirements, all MPH students in Milken Institute School of Public Health at The George Washington University (GWSPH) are required to satisfactorily complete a practice experience, known as a Practicum, before graduation.

Since practical knowledge and skills are essential to a successful career in public health, a planned, supervised and evaluated Practicum is an integral component of a public health professional degree program. The goal of the Practicum is to provide an opportunity for students to synthesize, integrate, and apply practical skills, knowledge, and training learned through courses, to gain professional experience in a public health work environment, and to
work on public health practice projects that are of particular interest to not only themselves but also the community at large.

In this guide, you will find a detailed description of the Practicum process and the role of a Site Preceptor. We hope this will help facilitate your participation and ensure a solid partnership with GWSPH. Thank you again for your interest in our program!

2. What is an MPH Practicum?
The Practicum is a partnership among Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH) students, The George Washington University as represented by your department’s PD, and sponsoring agencies/organizations as represented by the Site Preceptor. Each party in this mutually beneficial relationship assumes certain responsibilities, performs specific functions, and accrues benefits. The Practicum is guided by a set of goals and objectives, which are based on the needs and resources of all parties involved.

School-wide Practicum Standards
Although certain program-specific elements of the Practicum vary by department, the following are Practicum standards for all MPH students:

- The Practicum must be conducted in a public health or related setting;
- The Practicum must be supervised by an experienced public-health (or related field) professional as outlined below:
  - Doctoral-level degree (e.g., PhD, DrPH, MD, ScD, EdD, PsyD) and current, full-time, relevant professional public health experience; or
  - Master of Public Health (MPH) degree and at least three years of full-time, relevant professional public health experience; or
  - Other Master-level degree (e.g., MS, MA, MHA, MEd) and at least five years of full-time, relevant professional public health experience, or
  - Bachelor level degree and at least ten years of full-time, relevant professional public health experience.
- The student must complete at least 120 hours of supervised public health fieldwork;
- Students will receive a grade of Credit or No Credit by their academic department based in part of a recommendation by the Site Preceptor via a Final Evaluation in addition to a Student Self-Evaluation of the Practicum experience.
3. **Roles and Responsibilities**
During the Practicum, the student will work under the supervision of the PD, and the Preceptor, who agrees to supervise the student during the Practicum experience directly. Decisions on the specific objectives, activities, and division within the organization are determined through discussions and agreements amongst the Preceptor, the student, and the PD. The roles and responsibilities of a Preceptor are outlined below.

**Site Preceptors**
- Review the GWSPH Preceptor Practicum Guidebook and the [Preceptor Training Videos](#).
- Register in GWork for PublicHealth and complete the following:
  - Preceptor Professional Profile Application, and
  - Project Proposal (job description).
- Review and approve the student’s Practicum Plan.
- Engage with the student onsite and provide constructive feedback and guidance, including but not limited to skill acquisition and professional conduct.
- Verify the student’s weekly hours.
- Complete the following:
  - Midterm Evaluation in conjunction with the student, and
  - Final Site Preceptor Evaluation.
- Negotiate payment or stipend the student, if applicable.
- Address any reports from the student of concerns, including but not limited to site safety issues and sexual harassment.

4. **An Overview of the Practicum Experience**
What kind of organizations can be an MPH Practicum site?

In general, a Practicum site has the following elements:
- Serves a public health, health services, or social impact mission or supports an agency or department with such a mission;
- Addresses significant public health, health services or social problems;
- Offers students the opportunity to learn from public health professionals in a supervised environment; and
- Have well-defined activities that will enable students to apply their knowledge and skills.
Before Student Placement:
Preceptors are required to complete a Professional Preceptor Profile online through the GWork for Public Health database. As part of the Preceptor Profile, Preceptors will be required to submit a one-page bio-sketch or resume which can be pasted in as part of their Preceptor Profile. The bio sketch/resume is only visible to the student’s PD and the Associate Dean for Applied Public Health (ADAPH).
Once submitted, the student’s PD and the ADAPH will review and your registration, and you will receive log-in credentials, typically 3-5 business days following your submission.

For step-by-step instructions on the completion of the Preceptor Profile and Project Description, please see the Preceptor Training Videos

Interviewing and Selecting MPH Practicum Students
In most circumstances, you will meet our students via networking or a referral from a fellow student, or colleague, so an informal interview may have already have taken place. Students who are unfamiliar with your work will have the chance to view a description of your organization’s work and the project description online and may reach out to you to schedule an informal conversation about your work.

If your organization requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), an Affiliation Agreement (AA), or the like, please contact the student’s PD directly. All contractual agreements are reviewed by the University Office of General Counsel (OGC) and may require a significant amount of time for full execution.

*Note: 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 you discuss this with the student early and directly.*

5. The Practicum Plan
Students work with their Preceptor and their PD to design, review and approve their Practicum Plan. As part of the plan, the Preceptor and the student will identify learning objectives related to the student’s program-specific competencies for the Practicum experience. The student will submit the Plan online for review and approval by the Preceptor as well as the PD. All Preceptors must approve the plan by logging into GWork for Public Health.

Learning objectives are statements of what the student will achieve during the Practicum or will be able to do once the student has completed the Practicum. You will evaluate these objectives at the mid-point and the final evaluation of the Practicum.
Learning objectives must:

• Be linked to the student’s program-specific Practicum competencies (Program-specific competencies are listed here: https://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/Practicum under Core Competencies,
• Build the student’s professional skills, and
• Be prepared in conjunction with and approved by the Site Preceptor, Academic Advisor, and Practicum Director.

➢ See the table below for examples of appropriate learning objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MPH Foundational Program-Specific Competency</th>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess environmental and occupational exposures.</td>
<td>Use air-monitoring equipment correctly to obtain meaningful workplace samples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply knowledge of global health patterns and determinants in support of global health research.</td>
<td>Conduct a needs assessment in response to avian influenza in Uganda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing the methodology and quality of research results.</td>
<td>Synthesizing and summarizing health care policy news as it relates to children, low-income families, and Medicaid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Supervising the Practicum Experience

Students will work under your guidance to carry out the Practicum project following the expectations outlined in the Practicum Plan. The Practicum will entail a minimum of 60 hours of fieldwork per credit hour, a minimum of 120 hours in total for all MPH students. The Practicum may be finished in as little as three weeks, but should not take more than two semesters (28 weeks) to be completed.

When students are working, they are required to log in to the online practicum system, GWork for Public Health, and make a note of their hours. As the hours are completed, the system will track and subsequently prompt the student and Preceptor to fill out required, time-sensitive materials such as the Midpoint and Final Evaluations.
7. Evaluating the Practicum Experience

There are two types of evaluations that preceptors review/complete for the Practicum:

- A process evaluation referred to as the **Midterm Evaluation** that will be completed by the student during the Practicum; and
- An outcome evaluation referred to as the **Final Evaluation** will be completed at the end of the Practicum experience by both the Preceptor and the student.
  - The student will complete a final self-evaluation of the experience, and
  - The Preceptor will evaluation the student via a separate final evaluation.

The **Midterm Evaluation** will be completed with the student, and the student must submit any changes to the Practicum Plan to their PD.

The Final Evaluation and Final Self-Evaluation of the Practicum experience will be evaluated for a grade of Credit or No Credit by the Preceptor and the PD based on the reflections they document as relate to the learning objectives, skills built, challenges faced, rewards, and contributions to career goals. The student will have access to review the Site Preceptor’s final evaluation of their performance.

Practicum Website

The [http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/Practicum](http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/Practicum) provides you with one location for:

- Policies and requirements
- Required forms
- Program-specific materials
- Listing of Practicum opportunities
- Tools and resources

*All forms (e.g., practicum plan, evaluations) must be filled out electronically and submitted through the GWork for Public Health online practicum system.*

Site Preceptor training sessions will be available to provide you with an overview of how to use this site and address any questions you may have. Please reach out to us at sphprac@gwu.edu should you require any assistance or training resources.

8. Using the Online Practicum System: **GWork for Public Health**

Site Preceptors should review the short but very informative Preceptor Training Videos located on our Applied Public Health website. Please contact us at sphprac@gwu.edu should you wish to participate in a virtual training session for the online practicum system. A step-by-step guide is located in the Appendix.
9. Financial Compensation

Participation in the Practicum is not predicated on the availability of remuneration but the quality and value of the educational experience. Financial compensation for the Practicum, if available, is a matter to be negotiated between you and the student before the commencement of the Practicum experience.

The possibility of payment is not a consideration in the approval of the Practicum. In most cases, because of the limited duration and nature of Practicum placements, they are unpaid. However, preceptors are advised that the student must pay tuition to the University for a two-credit hour course (approximately $3,200) to receive credit for the Practicum.

Thank you for your support and mentorship of GWSPH MPH students, and your commitment to the future of the public health workforce!
# APPENDIX A: GWSPH Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Practicum Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Office Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental and Occupational Health</td>
<td>Environmental Health Science and Policy</td>
<td>Natasha Dupee</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ndupee@gwu.edu">ndupee@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-7671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peter LaPuma</td>
<td><a href="mailto:plapuma@gwu.edu">plapuma@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-5185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Global Environmental Health</td>
<td>Sabrina McCormick</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sabmc@gwu.edu">sabmc@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-3779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epidemiology and Biostatistics</td>
<td>Biostatistics and Bioinformatics</td>
<td>Ann Goldman-Hawes</td>
<td><a href="mailto:annieg@gwu.edu">annieg@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-4581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
<td>Joseph Schmitthenner</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jschmitthenner@gwu.edu">jschmitthenner@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-7154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise and Nutrition Sciences</td>
<td>Public Health Nutrition</td>
<td>Michelle Stevens</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mmsteven@gwu.edu">mmsteven@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-0086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Activity in Public Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Health</td>
<td>All GH Programs</td>
<td>Ron Waldman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ronaldman@gwu.edu">ronaldman@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-3780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Policy &amp; Management</td>
<td>Health Policy</td>
<td>Lara Cartwright-Smith</td>
<td><a href="mailto:laracs@gwu.edu">laracs@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-8641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPH@GW</td>
<td>All MPH@GW</td>
<td>J. Zoe Beckerman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jzbecker@gwu.edu">jzbecker@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-4210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nitasha Nagaraj</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nitasha@gwu.edu">nitasha@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-4351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MPH Advising Team</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mphadvising@gwu.edu">mphadvising@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention and Community Health</td>
<td>Health Promotion</td>
<td>Courtney A. Coffey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ccoffey@gwu.edu">ccoffey@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-1324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Health Communications &amp; Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maternal &amp; Child Health</td>
<td>Donald Strong</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dastrong@gwu.edu">dastrong@gwu.edu</a></td>
<td>202-994-8595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community-Oriented Primary Care</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Office of Applied Public Health
- Associate Dean for Applied Public Health: Dr. Gene Migliaccio, [geno@gwu.edu](mailto:geno@gwu.edu)
- Applied Learning Program Manager: Tiff Cunin, [tmcunin15@gwu.edu](mailto:tmcunin15@gwu.edu)
- Office of Applied Public Health: [sphprac@gwu.edu](mailto:sphprac@gwu.edu)
APPENDIX B: The Online Practicum System Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Register in the Online Practicum System: GWork for Public Health
   a. Go to https://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com
   b. Select “Employer”
   c. To register as a preceptor, select “SIGN UP”; To register as a preceptor and post a practicum opportunity, select “SIGN UP AND POST JOB”.

![Image of the GWork login page]

![Image of the GWork sign-up page]
d. Input your company name and information

Company Information
Please provide as much information as possible

Company Name *
GWSPH EXAMPLE

f. Input your contact information

Contact Information
Please provide as much information as possible. Accounts will not be approved without the full name of a specific contact person, phone number, and organizational email address/mailing address.

Title *
EXAMPLE PROGRAM MANAGER

Email *
EXAMPLE@EXAMPLE_JOB

Fax

Phone *
123-456-7890

Contact Education/Experience
Degree Earned *
Please select the highest degree earned.

e. Select the preferred MPH student department/track.

Coverage *
Do you have insurance to cover any unforeseen accidents?
- Yes
- No

Department/Track Preference (updated) *
Which department/track do you prefer the student to be studying?

Environmental and Occupational Health
Epidemiology and Biostatistics
Exercise and Nutrition Sciences
Global Health
Health Policy and Management
Online MPH @ GW
Prevention and Community Health

g. Paste your resume/CV into the form
h. Complete the remaining fields and select “Submit”. Your registration will be reviewed within 3-5 business days, and you will receive an email notification once complete. If you have questions about this process, please contact sphprac@gwu.edu.

2. Logging into GWork
a. After your registration is approved, you will receive an email from sphprac@gwu.edu informing you of your username and providing a link to set your password.
b. Set and save your password

![Set Password](image1)

b. Set and save your password

![Set Password](image1)

You can now login to GWork: publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com

- Select “Employer”

![Select Employer](image2)

- Enter your Username as it appears in your email and your password. Select “SIGN IN”

![Sign In](image3)
d. Your homescreen in GWork will look similar to this:

3. Posting/Viewing a Project Proposal
   a. Select “Create a Job Posting” from the Shortcuts menu.
   b. Complete the required fields.
      i. In the “Project Availability” field select “Open” if the project is open for applications, or select “In Progress” if you have already identified a student.
c. Once you have completed the posting select “Submit”

![Submit button](image)

Your posting will now be visible on your home page under “Job / Project Proposals”

i. You may edit your posting by clicking on its title

![Edit button](image)
4. Approving a Student Project Plan

a. You will receive an email alert when a student has successfully submitted their practicum plan to your proposal. The email will contain a direct link to the approval form, but you can also access and approve the plan via logging in to GWork for Public Health.

![Practicum Plan Approval Required Notice](image)

You can use the following links to review and approve this practicum project plan:

- [https://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com/ioxLearning/bdf52233c56ca15c64b2cd21f3b137d](https://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com/ioxLearning/bdf52233c56ca15c64b2cd21f3b137d)

Or log in to [https://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com/employers/](https://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com/employers/), and go to the "Active Practicum" tab to access this record.

Thank You

b. When you select the link, you will be taken to the plan approval screen. After scrolling down and reviewing the plan, select “Approve” or “Reject.”
c. When you login to the system directly, you can review and approve the plan via your GWork home page by selecting “Active Practicums”, “Approvals”, “Project Plans”, and then “View” under the appropriate plan.
d. If you approve the plan, select “Approve”. If you do not approve the plan, select “Reject” and provide feedback to the student in the provided field. Approval and rejection notifications will be sent directly to the student.

5. Approving a Midterm Evaluation

a. After the student has recorded 60 hours of practicum activity, they will be required to complete a Midterm Evaluation. The email will contain a direct link to the approval form, but you can also review and approve the evaluation via logging in to GWork for Public Health
b. When you select the link, you will be taken to the Midpoint Evaluation screen. After scrolling down and reviewing the evaluation, select “Approve”. If you have questions about the evaluation, speak directly to the student and their Practicum Director.

c. When you login to the system directly, you can review and approve the evaluation via your GWork home page by selecting “Active Practicums”, “Evaluations”, “Midterm Evaluations”, and then “Review” to the right of the appropriate plan.
6. Submitting a Preceptor Final Evaluation
   a. After the student has recorded 120 hours of practicum activity, you will be required to complete a Final Evaluation of the student’s practicum. The email will direct you to login to GWork for Public Health to submit your evaluation.
b. After you login to the system, you can submit the Final Evaluation via your GWork home page by selecting “Active Practicums”, “Evaluations”, and “Final Evaluations”.

c. Select “Evaluate” under the appropriate student’s practicum.
d. Complete the required fields in the Final Evaluation form. You will be able to view the student’s activities and provide written feedback.

Employer Name
BLS Studios, LLC

Supervisor Phone
5555555555

Professional

Reliable *
Was reliable (attendance, punctuality, etc.)
- Unacceptable  - Poor  - Acceptable  - Good  - Excellent

Behavior *
Demonstrated appropriate professional behavior
- Unacceptable  - Poor  - Acceptable  - Good  - Excellent

Initiative *
Was motivated and demonstrated initiative, as needed
- Unacceptable  - Poor  - Acceptable  - Good  - Excellent

Independent Work *
Worked independently, as needed
- Unacceptable  - Poor  - Acceptable  - Good  - Excellent
e. Input your name, date, and then select “Save” to submit the evaluation.

We strongly encourage perceptors to provide constructive, usable feedback not only for the student but also for our program. Your feedback is reviewed closely and taken very seriously in our program evaluation and quality improvement processes.

Thank you again for your interest and time in precepting for an MPH student. Please do not hesitate to contact us directly at sphprac@gwu.edu should you have questions, concerns, or would like to engage in more applied learning opportunities with our students.