

# Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Department of Prevention and  
Community Health

**PUBH 6014.11**

**Community Oriented Primary Care  
(COPC) Practicum Experience**

## Instructor

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## Practicum Description

The practicum course is a *planned, supervised, and evaluated* practice experience. The goal of the practicum is to provide an opportunity for you to synthesize, integrate, and apply practical skills, knowledge, and training learned through courses, to gain professional experience in a professional public health work environment, and to work on public health practice projects that are of particular interest to you.

A practicum provides the opportunity to integrate and apply classroom learning in a public health work environment, enabling you to observe and learn from professionals in the field. You contribute to a community's resources and to the solution of public health problems, while developing *practical skills* and *personal confidence* as a public health professional. If you are new to the field of public health, the practicum serves as an important first step in a public health career, providing an introduction to the practical skills and experience necessary for a productive and fulfilling career. If you have had prior work experience, you will find that the practicum provides the opportunity to hone your skills or to gain new experience in a different area of specialization.

Practicum placements are individually selected and therefore, the focus, substance, and approach of the practicum will vary, depending on your particular degree, program/concentration and on your specific interests, professional goals, and objectives. The objectives of the practicum must be consistent with the general objectives of the School, and your academic program. ***COPC students are expected to work in a community setting that provides health services, preferably primary care services.*** During the practicum you will work under the supervision of the *practicum director* and the *site preceptor*, who agree to directly supervise the practicum experience. Decisions on the nature, site, specific objectives, and activities of the practicum are arrived at following discussions and agreements among the student, practicum director, and site preceptor (and perhaps other faculty members who have expertise in the area).

The standard practicum experience will require a minimum of 60 hours of field work per credit hour. This is equivalent to 120 hours for the programs in our Department. Your practicum can be performed in a concentrated fashion in one semester, or can be carried out over two semesters.

The *Culminating Experience*, a separate course directed by your advisor, requires that you integrate the knowledge gained from your coursework and create a product, such as an assessment or evaluation, which is accompanied by a written thesis and oral presentation. *You can conduct the Culminating Experience at the same location as your practicum, but you will need to complete most of your coursework before beginning your Culminating Experience.*

### **Practicum Prerequisite(s):**

- PubH 6007 Social and Behavioral Approaches to Public Health
- PubH 6510 Community-Oriented Primary Care: Principles and Practice
- Practicum online training (search *Practicum Video Tutorials* in [GWSPH Source](#))
- Research ethics training (accessible at <http://www.citiprogram.org>); submit your certificate to the Student Records Office by emailing to [gwsphrecords@gwu.edu](mailto:gwsphrecords@gwu.edu).

### **Your Practicum Plan**

Your practicum plan describes what you will accomplish during the practicum. It includes broad competency statements about the skills you will develop, learning objectives about what you will achieve during the practicum, and your activities, the tasks you will perform to achieve your learning objectives and competencies.

### **Competencies**

*COPC practicum students will develop one or more of the following skills and demonstrate that they can:*

- ◆ Communicate the principles and methods of COPC, including the importance of community participation and partnership, to a wide variety of audiences.
- ◆ Help organizations define and characterize communities, which will be the focus of a COPC practice.
- ◆ Help organizations prioritize community health issues using the principles of COPC.
- ◆ Gather best-practices models for community-based interventions.

### **Learning Objectives**

Learning objectives describe concretely what you will *do* during the practicum. They relate to the competencies but are more specific. They must be observable and measurable. You can include more than 1 learning objective for each competency, but be realistic! You only have 120 hours.

For example, a learning objective can state:

“By the end of the practicum, I will plan a curriculum on increasing physical activity among teens using the Shaw Health Center.”

You must express your learning objectives in *action terms that can be measured*, such as plan, describe, evaluate, assess, create, write, teach, analyze. DO NOT write: learn, know, or understand.

## Activities

Activities are the actual, specific tasks you will conduct for each learning objective. They can include researching best practices, writing reports, teaching classes, analyzing data, evaluating programs.

## Website, Required Texts and Documents

During the practicum, you will be required to use the [Practicum System in GWork for Public Health](#) on a regular basis. All of the required practicum forms (see below) will be available and must be entered on this site. In addition, specific departmental materials will be available on this site.

- ◆ *Practicum Guide for Students* (search *Student Practicum Guidebook* in [GWSPH Source](#)) describing the steps required for the course
- ◆ Research modules on ethical conduct of research (<http://www.citiprogram.org>)
- ◆ Student Profile form to describe your experiences, skills, and practicum interests
- ◆ Practicum Plan to describe your learning objectives, practicum activities, and time frame (designed with the preceptor and Practicum Director).
- ◆ Time Log where you record the hours of work
- ◆ Mid-point evaluation form to report your practicum progress
- ◆ Final evaluation form to evaluate your preceptor and the practicum experience
- ◆ Student Practicum Checklist of required steps and forms to complete
- ◆ *Your Guide to Traveling Abroad*, a GWU guidebook for practicum experiences conducted abroad.

## Methods of Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on an ongoing basis by their Site Preceptor. A mid-course evaluation written by the student and the final evaluations completed by the Site Preceptor and

student will assess the student's achievement of his/her learning objectives and performance related to the competencies during the Practicum.

The Preceptor will use the following domains to evaluate the student:

- Professional Skills:
  - Reliability (attendance, punctuality, etc.)
  - Motivation and Initiative
  - Ability to work independently, as needed
  - Completion of projects in a timely manner
  - Ability to solve problems effectively
- Interpersonal Skills:
  - Ability to express ideas effectively, both in oral communications and in writing
  - Ability to work with others
  - Solicitation and acceptance of feedback, as well as the utilization of suggestions
- Knowledge:
  - Acquisition of knowledge, on site, to perform the project
  - Use of resources to complete the practicum
  - Demonstration of the ability to transfer public health knowledge and skills to address practical issues.
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At the end of the practicum, you will evaluate your site preceptor and practicum experience.

## **Grading Scale**

The practicum is graded as Credit or No Credit. Credit/No Credit will be determined by the Final Site Preceptor Evaluation of the Student as well as input from and approval by the Practicum Director. The student will receive credit if 70 percent of their scores indicates acceptable/passable or better performance on the Final Site Preceptor Evaluation of the Student.

## **Attendance/Participation**

Full participation (120 hours in the field) is required. Days and hours of the week for the work will be determined by the student and Site Preceptor.

## **Academic Integrity**

Please review the University's policy on academic integrity, located at [www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html). All graded work must be completed in accordance with The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity.

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. Common examples of academically dishonest behavior include, but are not limited to, the following: Cheating; Fabrication; Plagiarism; Falsification and forgery of University academic documents; Facilitating academic dishonesty.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact Don Strong privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Disability Support Services Office at 202.994.8250, Suite 242 Marvin Center, <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss>, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

### **Adverse Weather**

You will follow the guidelines established by your practicum site.

### **Schedule of Meetings and Registration**

Students will complete the online training offered by the School during the semester before they begin the practicum. Students must also schedule a meeting with the Practicum Director to discuss their learning objectives and options before registering for the practicum. Registration, using a *printed Registration Transaction Form (RTF)* requires the signature of your Practicum Director. There is NO online registration, but *students can register at any time during the semester they conduct the practicum*. Students will report their hours electronically during the practicum. There are no other meetings required, but students are encouraged to stay in touch with their Practicum Director.

### **Waiver of PubH 6014**

Students who want to petition to waive PubH6014 must submit the Practicum Equivalent Experience (PEE) form and meet these requirements:

- ◆ The PEE form, including the description of practicum equivalent experience and the student's resume, must be *submitted during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of enrollment*.
- ◆ The applicant must have completed 3 years or more of *relevant, full-time public health* experience prior to matriculation.
- ◆ At least one program specific practicum competency must be met in order to submit this form.
- ◆ Only under extraordinary circumstances will the practicum experience be waived.