

Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences

PUBH 6014

Practicum: Physical Activity in Public Health MPH
2 credit hours

(Required for all students pursuing a
MPH in Physical Activity in Public Health)

Instructor

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Course Description

The practicum is a three-way partnership among students, SPH, and sponsoring agencies/organizations in which the practicum takes place under the supervision of a site preceptor. The practicum is a planned, supervised, and evaluated practice experience in Physical Activity in Public Health that provides students with an opportunity to:

- synthesize, integrate, and apply practical skills, knowledge, and training learned through courses,
- gain professional experience in a professional public health work environment, and
- work on public health practice projects that are of particular interest.

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 profession. For students with prior work experience, the practicum provides the opportunity to hone skills or to gain new experience in a different area of specialization.

The practicum is a 2-credit requirement during which the student works 120 hours on-site in a public health setting under the supervision of a site preceptor who has agreed to directly supervise the work of the student. Decisions on the practicum site, nature of the work, specific learning objectives, and activities of the practicum are arrived at following discussions and agreements among the student, the EXNS practicum director, and the site preceptor, whose respective responsibilities are outlined below. Students should plan to complete the practicum within the semester of registration and are required to complete the practicum within two semesters. Students will be billed for the course at the time of registration (which may be any time during the semester) and the course credit will be applied to the semester of registration. Most full-time students complete the practicum requirement during their second full year of study, following the successful completion of the prerequisites listed below. The Culminating Experience (PUBH 6015), is separate and distinct from the practicum and must be completed in the student's final year of study

Course Prerequisite(s):

Students must successfully complete the following courses before enrolling in the Practicum.

Course Number	Course Title	Semester Completed
PUBH 6002	Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	
PUBH 6003	Principles and Practice of Epidemiology	
PUBH 6006	Management and Policy Approaches to Public Health	
PUBH 6007 *	Social and Behavioral Approaches to Public Health	
EXNS 6208	Physical Activity: Physiology and Epidemiology	

* This course may be taken concurrently with the Practicum.

Program Competencies (list)

1. Students will demonstrate *knowledge* and *understanding* of the pathophysiology of selected chronic disease processes.
2. Students will demonstrate *knowledge* and *understanding* of the role of physical activity in the health and function of the general population.
3. Students will demonstrate *knowledge* and *understanding* of various physiological and psychosocial mechanisms that mediate the relation between physical inactivity and chronic disease morbidity and mortality.
4. Students will *apply* various theories of social and behavioral change in patterns of physical activity adoption and maintenance.
5. Students will demonstrate skills in the *design* of physical activity interventions that are consistent with these social and behavioral theories.
6. Students will *demonstrate* skills in physical activity assessment using state-of-the-art technology.
7. Students will *apply* epidemiological methods to develop and test hypotheses pertaining to physical activity and health and disease outcomes at the population level.
8. Students will *design* and evaluate interventions for improving physical activity at the community level.
9. Students will *appreciate* the role of public health policy in altering physical activity patterns at the community level.
10. Students will *integrate* the science and practice of exercise science and public health in promoting an active lifestyle in the workplace, the school system, and within the community.
11. Students will *appreciate* the role of both traditional and non-traditional public health partners in physical activity promotion.
12. Students will *design* public health policy that can alter physical activity patterns across multiple settings.

Course Learning Objectives – Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:	Meets Competency Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize, integrate, and apply practical skills, knowledge, and training learned through courses; 	# 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply practical knowledge and skills in a professional public health work environment; 	# 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with public health practitioners from a variety of disciplines; 	# 11

Procedures for enrolling in the Practicum:

1. First, review the materials on the practicum website: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/practicum> . Thoroughly read this syllabus and the SPH MPH Practicum Experience Student Guidebook, available at <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/downloads/Student%20Practicum%20Guidebook.pdf>
2. Go to <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/practicum> and submit a student application. This will generate a login and password for the practicum management website, if you do not have one already. Your practicum director will verify your profile on the practicum management website.
3. Complete the two required training components (CITI Training and Practicum Training), both online courses linked from the practicum training site: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/practicum>
 - a. For the CITI Training, you must complete the Social and Behavioral Researchers module. When you have completed it, print the final completion page showing your grade and turn that page in to the Office of Student Records (950 New Hampshire Ave, NW, 2nd Floor). Save a copy for your records.
 - b. The Practicum Training is an online course. First, watch the student practicum training online video in its entirety and pay careful attention to the policies and process described. Second, click the link at the bottom of the practicum training page that says “Start the Practicum Test Now” and

take the test, which will measure your knowledge of the practicum training materials. You will receive an email confirmation of your passing grade; print a copy for your records. You must pass the test in order to be able to submit a practicum plan.

4. The Office of Student Records will verify your practicum and CITI training. Once those steps are completed and checked off, you will be able to submit a practicum plan (once your preceptor has submitted a project for you to select when submitting your plan).
5. If you have not already identified a practicum site, be sure to meet with your academic advisor to discuss appropriate practicum opportunities before you begin searching for a site. See the “Finding a Practicum Site” section below for additional suggestions for identifying an appropriate practicum. We suggest that you draft a resume, cover letter, and an initial set of practicum expectations and learning objectives to prepare for communicating with potential preceptors. You are not limited to practicum sites or preceptors who are already in the practicum system. On the contrary, you are encouraged to find a practicum that best suits your interests and career goals. A new preceptor will submit a preceptor application and site application to be approved before you can submit your plan.
6. Proactively contact preferred practicum sites and site preceptors. (See the “Finding a Practicum Site” section below for more suggestions.)
7. Email your practicum director and request a meeting to discuss your practicum.
8. If you have not already done so, meet with your preceptor to develop your practicum plan, ensuring that it satisfies at least one of the Physical Activity in Public Health MPH competencies described below. You can refer to this sample practicum plan form in developing your plan, but the plan will be submitted online, not in paper form: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/practicum/download/Student%20Practicum%20Plan.pdf>
9. If your preceptor and/or practicum site are not already in the practicum management website, ask your preceptor to submit a preceptor application and site application (Go to <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/practicum/practicumforms.cfm> and click on “practicum applications” and then “preceptor.” If the preceptor’s site is not already in the system, the preceptor should be prompted to submit a site at the same time but if not, they should go back to the “practicum applications” tab and select “site” to submit a site application. The site application is available at: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/practicum/practicumApp/applicationPre.cfm>
10. Once your preceptor and site have been verified, your preceptor will receive an email containing a login and password for the practicum management website.
11. The preceptor must log into the practicum management website (<http://publichealth.gwu.edu/practicum/index.cfm>) and submit a project briefly describing the work you will do. The preceptor guidebook is available on the internet at: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/practicum/download/SP%20Guidebook.pdf>
12. Then you log into the practicum management website and submit your practicum plan, selecting the project that your preceptor submitted. Some organizations and projects have similar names, so be sure that you select the correct project for your site and preceptor.
13. Complete your plan online, including at least one of the Physical Activity in Public Health competencies listed below. List specific learning objectives and the activities to be performed during the practicum.
14. Fill out a paper registration transaction form (RTF) completed for PUBH 6014 for the semester in which you will begin the practicum. Submit this form to your practicum director to complete registration (you may bring it to the practicum director in person or scan and email the completed form to her). The form is available here (first form listed): <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/forms>. The CRN for PUBH 6014 is available on the published course schedule for that semester: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/courses> .
15. Once your plan is submitted, your practicum director will review and approve it online. At that point, she will sign your registration transaction form and send it over to the Office of Student Records for processing. It may take up to 7 days for the course to appear on your list of courses in Banner/GWeb. However, you may

begin logging hours in the practicum system as soon as your plan has been signed by both your practicum director and site preceptor, and the Office of Student Records has checked “registered” on your profile (which should take a day or two at the most).

16. Note that you cannot log your hours retroactively for a date before your plan was signed and you were registered for the course. Therefore, you should ensure that the above steps have been completed before you begin your practicum.

Finding a Practicum Site:

Students are responsible for proactively finding a site in which to complete his or her practicum. To do so, students should think about what practicum site would best serve their career goals and may either apply to an internship posted by an organization of interest, and then make that internship their practicum, or reach out directly to experienced professionals with whom the student would most like to work. Students may review the list of past and present sites and projects on the practicum management website (<http://publichealth.gwu.edu/practicum/practicumApp/projectView.cfm>) by logging into the system and selecting “project information” from the menu at the left. (You must have a login and password to access the site - see Step 2 above.) Note that the list of projects includes all departments, so not all projects are appropriate for a Physical Activity in Public Health practicum. If a past project seems like a good fit for your interests and skills and preceptor’s email address is listed, you may contact the preceptor and ask if they have a current need and appropriate project for an MPH student to work on as a practicum. If the preceptor’s email address is not visible on the project page, they might not want to be contacted by students, but you can ask your practicum director to reach out to the preceptor in that case.

Besides the practicum website, you should review these sites for internship announcements:

- Weekly PHN Student Update e-mails
- SPH Jobs listings (<http://publichealth.gwu.edu/services/career-center/jobs>)
- APHA Public Health CareerMart (<http://careers.apha.org/jobseekers/>)
- Idealist.org (<http://www.idealists.org/>)
- PublicHealthJobs.net (<http://www.publichealthjobs.net/>, registration required)

If needed, the practicum director will work with the student to locate an appropriate practicum site and preceptor. If the practicum and site are not already verified on the practicum management website, the practicum director will review and approve the potential practicum site and preceptor.

Students may receive payment for work performed under the practicum. However, if a student intends to use a formal internship (i.e., an internship arrived at separate and apart from the practicum) as a practicum, the student must set up the practicum before beginning the internship. If the internship is begun prior to the setting up of a practicum, it may be subject to the rules for completing the practicum at your current place of employment (see below). An internship can be longer than the 120 hours required for the practicum, but the practicum should be completed at the beginning of the internship. A student may also continue on at the practicum site as an employee after the practicum is completed.

Completing the Practicum:

Students have the following responsibilities after enrolling in PUBH 6014:

- Ensure that your preceptor has signed your practicum plan (by logging into the website and clicking on the bottom of your plan). Students will not be able to start logging hours towards the practicum until both your preceptor and practicum director have signed your plan.
- Once you begin working at the practicum site with their preceptor, log your hours regularly on the practicum management website (<http://publichealth.gwu.edu/practicum/index.cfm>). This will allow your preceptor and practicum director to monitor your progress and will trigger midpoint and final evaluations at 60 and 120 hours logged. Do not keep track of your hours separately and attempt to log them all at once because that would circumvent the evaluation triggers and your preceptor may not be able to verify the hours if too much time has passed. Failure to complete the midpoint or final evaluation in a timely manner may prevent a student from completing the practicum successfully.

- After logging 60 hours of work, students will be prompted to complete an online midpoint evaluation. Your preceptor and practicum director must sign your midpoint evaluation before you can continue to log hours. Although the midpoint evaluation is an opportunity to address any problems that have arisen, do not wait until the midpoint if you are having a significant problem with your preceptor or practicum work, such as a lack of substantive work or a lack of contact with your preceptor. These issues can prevent you from having an appropriate learning experience and may interfere with your ability to successfully complete the practicum. Any issues should be brought up with your preceptor and, if necessary, with your practicum director, as soon as possible.
- After your preceptor and practicum director have signed your midpoint evaluation, you may continue to log hours. At 120 hours, you will be prompted to complete a final evaluation of the practicum experience, which your preceptor will not see. Your preceptor will be prompted to complete an evaluation of your work and recommend awarding credit or not. You must review and sign your preceptor's evaluation of you.
- Upon completion of your preceptor's evaluation of you, your practicum director will review both the final evaluation you completed and your preceptor's evaluation of you. Your grade (credit or no credit) will be based on your preceptor's evaluation of your performance during the practicum.

Completing the Practicum at Your Current Place of Employment:

Although not encouraged, students may complete the practicum requirement at their current place of employment, provided that:

- The organization engages in health policy work;
- The organization and preceptor have been approved by SPH;
- The site preceptor is not the student's current job supervisor; and
- The content of the practicum, as described in the student's practicum plan, is separate and distinct from the student's regular work responsibilities.

Methods of Evaluation:

The practicum requirement is evaluated on a credit/no credit basis. No specific grades are issued for the practicum. The site preceptor will complete both a midpoint and final evaluation of the student's overall performance, and then the practicum director will assess every aspect of the student's practicum experience, including all of the student's responsibilities outlined above. The practicum director will then submit your credit or no credit directly in Banner/GWeb.

Grading Scale:

The practicum requirement is evaluated on a credit/no credit basis.

Practicum Equivalent Experience:

The SPH MPH Practicum Experience Student Guidebook allows for the waiver of the practicum requirement in very specific circumstances. The practicum can be waived only if the student had 3 or more years of full-time public health experience prior to the date of matriculation into the GW MPH program. Students seeking to waive the practicum must file a Practicum Equivalent Experience (PEE) Application (<http://sphhs.gwu.edu/pdf/PEE.pdf>) in their first semester of the MPH program. The Application must describe in detail the 3 years of public health experience, including the names and contact information of the performance sites and the past experience must address at least one of the Public Health Nutrition competencies listed above. The application should be submitted to the student's practicum director for review and approval. If the practicum director approves the application, it will be forwarded to SPH administration for approval. Again, this should be done as soon as possible after the student begins the MPH program since the PEE Application must be submitted in the first semester of study. If the petition is granted, students do not have to complete the practicum requirement, but must replace the 2 practicum credits with elective credits.

Blackboard

Blackboard will be used for posting course files and assignments and for communicating with the class. You are already enrolled for this course on Blackboard if you have completed registration for the course. It is your responsibility to periodically check the course site (log in at <http://blackboard.gwu.edu/> Using your gwu.edu address) for updates to the syllabus/readings.

Academic Integrity

All Milken Institute School of Public Health Students are required to complete two (separate) online activities regarding academic integrity -- the GW Academic Integrity Activity and the Identifying and Avoiding Plagiarism Activity. Both activities must be completed within 2 weeks of starting your coursework at Milken Institute School of Public Health. - See more at:

<https://publichealth.gwu.edu/integrity#sthash.FIIRdO5H.dpuf>

Please review the University's policy on academic integrity, located at www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html and complete the online training for all GWSPH students; 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 your instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Disability Support Services Office at 202.994.8250, <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss> , to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations

Adverse Weather/Class Cancellation

In the advent of inclement weather or any other emergency, the Milken Institute School of Public Health will follow the decision of the University. Call the University hotline at 202.994.5050 or check the Human Resources status button at <http://hr.gwu.edu/adverse-weather-conditions-and-emergency-situations>. In the event of class cancellation, we will email you about rescheduling, assignments due, etc.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Procedures

The University has asked all faculty to inform students of these procedures, prepared by the GW Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management in collaboration with the Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

To Report an Emergency or Suspicious Activity

Call the University Police Department at 202-994-6111 (Foggy Bottom) or 202-242-6111 (Mount Vernon).

Shelter in Place – General Guidance

Although it is unlikely that we will ever need to shelter in place, it is helpful to know what to do just in case. No matter where you are, the basic steps of shelter in place will generally remain the same.

- If you are inside, stay where you are unless the building you are in is affected. If it is affected, you should evacuate. If you are outdoors, proceed into the closest building or follow instructions from emergency personnel on the scene.
- Locate an interior room to shelter inside. If possible, it should be above ground level and have the fewest number of windows. If sheltering in a room with windows, move away from the windows. If there is a large group of people inside a particular building, several rooms maybe necessary.

- Shut and lock all windows (for a tighter seal) and close exterior doors.
- Turn off air conditioners, heaters, and fans. Close vents to ventilation systems as you are able. (University staff will turn off ventilation systems as quickly as possible).
- Make a list of the people with you and ask someone to call the list in to UPD so they know where you are sheltering and who is with you. If only students are present, one of the students should call in the list.
- Await further instructions. If possible, visit GW Campus Advisories for incident updates (<http://CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu>) or call the GW Information Line 202-994-5050.
- Make yourself comfortable and look after one other. You will get word as soon as it is safe to come out.

Evacuation

An evacuation will be considered if the building we are in is affected or we must move to a location of greater safety. We will always evacuate if the fire alarm sounds. In the event of an evacuation, please gather your personal belongings quickly (purse, keys, GWorld card, etc.) and proceed to the nearest exit. Every classroom has a map at the door designating both the shortest egress and an alternate egress. Anyone who is physically unable to walk down the stairs should wait in the stairwell, *behind the closed doors*. Firemen will check the stairwells upon entering the building.

- Once you have evacuated the building, proceed to our primary rendezvous location: the court yard area between the GW Hospital and Ross Hall. In the event that this location is unavailable, we will meet on the ground level of the Visitors Parking Garage (I Street entrance, at 22nd Street). From our rendezvous location, we will await instructions to re-enter the School.

Alert DC

Alert DC provides free notification by e-mail or text message during an emergency. Visit GW Campus Advisories for a link and instructions on how to sign up for alerts pertaining to GW. If you receive an Alert DC notification during class, you are encouraged to share the information immediately.

GW Alert

GW Alert provides popup notification to desktop and laptop computers during an emergency. In the event that we receive an alert to the computer in our classroom, we will follow the instructions given. You are also encouraged to download this application to your personal computer. Visit GW Campus Advisories to learn how.

Additional Information

Additional information about emergency preparedness and response at GW or the University's operating status can be found on GW Campus Advisories (<http://CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu>) or by calling the GW Information Line at 202-994-5050.

Personal Support

Counseling Center: The GW University Counseling Center offers a wide variety of counseling services to students including individual counseling, group counseling, academic support, career counseling, referral information, and alcohol/drug services. The Counseling Center is available to both undergraduate and graduate students. For more information: 2033 K Street, NW, #330, 202-994-5330, <http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/>. Information on other available resources is available on the GW website and in the SPH Student Handbook <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/services/students>.