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1. Introduction

A Note from the Associate Dean of Public Health Practice

Gaining meaningful experiences from the workplace is key to a successful career in any sector, and as such, the Applied Practice Experience (formerly known as the Practicum) is a very important part of your public health training. Beyond providing work experience, your practicum presents an opportunity to learn how to: communicate what you have learned of public health science to a diverse array of partners, end-users, stakeholders, and clients; effectively propose strategic approaches to improving community health outcomes and establishing health equity; bring novel problem solving methods to authentic public health challenges; facilitate team work-flow using your personal blend of leadership skills; and creating new sources of support for the ever-changing population health landscape. To do this, it is vital that you select a Preceptor (and Site) skilled and willing to provide you with the experiences necessary to help you become a highly valued team-member. In your practicum, do not be afraid to experience an uncharted area of public health / social impact engagement that could send you up a new career path, or at very least expand your network.

From matriculation through graduation some of the highlights of your time at The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health ("GW SPH") will be the time you spend putting your skills and knowledge to work. Your professional development and relationship building through internships, Applied Practice Experience, culminating experience, are all important steps on your way to a working in this field we call “public health”.

If you have any questions about your development as a leader and public health professional, please send an email to me at pndv@gwu.edu so we can arrange time to talk.

Pierre Vigilance, MD, MPH
Associate Dean for Public Health Practice
Associate Professor of Health Policy & Management

Applied Practice Experience Requirements

As a requirement established by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH),

All professional 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, School of Public Health Accreditation Criteria, amended June 2005.

In concordance with these requirements, all MPH students in the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University (Milken Institute SPH) are required to satisfactorily complete a practice experience or Applied Practice Experience before graduation.
Since practical knowledge and skills are essential to a successful career in public health, a **planned, supervised, and evaluated** Applied Practice Experience is an essential component of a public health professional degree program. The goals of the Applied Practice Experience are to:

1. Provide an opportunity for you to synthesize, integrate, and apply practical skills, knowledge, and training learned through courses
2. To gain professional experience in a public health work environment
3. To work on public health projects that are of particular interest to you.

The school’s location in the nation’s capital allows for a variety of unique experiences within a multitude of Applied Practice Experience sites. To help facilitate this experience, the Milken Institute SPH has created this guidebook to give you an overall picture of the practicum and expectations.

Please keep in mind that departments and programs have *additional* requirements to tailor the experience to their specific program competencies.

### 2. Who is involved in your Applied Practice Experience?

The Applied Practice Experience has a number of partners, starting with you and your department’s practicum advisor. The two of you should meet to discuss your academic and professional interests, so you can determine good options for where to go to get your practice experience. Where you choose to work is ultimately up to you, there are some great options in the “Practicum Archive” - [ADD LINK TO SOURCE](#), and your department’s Practicum Advisor is also a great source for potential preceptors and sites. At any stage in the process you can also engage in conversations with your academic advisor, other professors, and the Associate Dean for Practice. All of them are in a position to give some guidance and insight into the best way for you to get the most out of this experience.

### 3. What is the MPH Applied Practice Experience?

The Applied Practice Experience is a partnership among GWSPH students, The George Washington University as represented by your department’s Applied Practice Experience Advisor, 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 Applied Practice Experience is guided by a set of goals and objectives, which are based on the needs and resources of all parties involved.

As the student, 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 Applied Practice Experience 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 Applied Practice Experience provides the opportunity to hone your skills or to gain new experience in a different area of the field.

Applied Practice Experience opportunities are individually selected, and therefore the focus, substance, and approach of the practicum will vary depending on your particular degree, academic program, and specific interests, professional goals, and objectives. The objectives of the Applied Practice Experience must be consistent with the general objectives of the School and your academic program.

During the Applied Practice Experience, you will work under the supervision of your department’s Practicum Advisor and Site Preceptor, who agree to supervise directly the practicum experience. Decisions on the nature, site, specific objectives, and activities of the practicum are arrived at following discussions and agreements amongst you, the Practicum Advisor, and the Site Preceptor (and perhaps other faculty resources that have expertise in the area). The roles and responsibilities of each person are outlined in this guidebook.

4. Prerequisites

The standard Applied Practice Experience will require a minimum of 2-credits for a total of 120 hours or work that is preferably performed with partners outside of GW. If GW faculty are selected to serve as preceptors, the work they engage students in should be externally oriented, i.e. provides a clear opportunity for the student to interface with partners who are outside of GW. The option to work with a GW faculty member should be considered on a case-by-case basis, and discussed in detail with your applied practice experience advisor.

Course Information
Based on your department / academic program you may be required to complete specific courses before enrolling in the Applied Practice Experience. Please refer to your academic program’s syllabus for details of the specific prerequisites.

CITI Online Course
You are required to complete the CITI Course in The Protection of Human Research Subjects prior to beginning your Applied Practice Experience. In order to fulfill this requirement, complete the Social and Behavioral Researchers or Biomedical module.

Registering for the CITI course:

1. Go to https://www.citiprogram.org/
2. Click: Register for the CITI course.
3. Select Institution (GWU is under All Others, a drop-down list)
4. Create a new username and password.
5. Enter your contact information.
7. Select Social and Behavioral Research or Biomedical and submit.
8. Select “No” to take the CITI Basic course module and submit.
9. Select “No” to bypass the HIPS course module and submit.
10. Select “No” to bypass the Good Clinical Practice in English course and submit.
11. Select “No” to confirm your institution choice (George Washington University)

Once you have completed the course, email the certificate to Student Records at gwsphrecords@gwu.edu You should also keep a copy for your records.

Registration for PUBH 6014 Practicum Experience
You may not enroll in PubH 6014 through online registration or by using the “EZ” form. To register for PUBH 6014 you must complete a Registration Transaction Form (RTF).

This form is available at http://publichealth.gwu.edu/pdf/reg_transaction_form.pdf. You will upload your completed RTF in Online Practicum System for Public Health upon submitting your practicum plan, details below. Your Practicum Director/Coordinator will submit the RTF to the Registrar once your practicum is fully approved.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Student

• Review Applied Practice Experience-related materials and watch training videos on GWSPH Source (Students > Practicum in main navigation) including but not limited to whether your practicum plan will require research pre-review or IRB Human Subjects approval by GW
• Discuss Applied Practice Experience and related issues with your Practicum Advisor
• Proactively select a practicum site and Site Preceptor
• Negotiate payment with the Site Preceptor (if applicable).
• Complete all forms in a timely manner
• Act as a professional at all times
• Contact the Site Preceptor and Practicum Director if there are any problems, including site safety issues and/or sexual harassment
• See the Student Applied Practice Experience Checklist* for a list of tasks that you must complete during the practicum.

***If applicable, complete a petition for Practicum Equivalent Experience and submit it to the Practicum Director during your 1st term of enrollment***
Practicum Director/Coordinator

- Act as a guide for the Student
  - Review program-specific practicum requirements with the you
  - Discuss potential sites and types of practicum experiences with you
  - Discuss practicum progress with the you, while you are on site
- Review and approve the following forms:
  - Student Application
  - Preceptors Application
  - Student’s Practicum Plan
  - Midpoint Evaluation and Revised Practicum Plan, if submitted
  - Final Evaluations: Site Preceptor and Student
  - Practicum Equivalent Experience petitions

- Judge practicum as credit or no credit, based on evaluation and input from the Site Preceptor
- Address any reports of problems, including site safety issues and/or sexual harassment

Site Preceptor

- Review practicum system training videos
- Register on Online Practicum System for Public Health and complete the following:
  - Preceptor Profile Application
  - Project Description
- Review and approve your Practicum Plan
- Engage with you on site in work and provide constructive feedback and guidance to the Student
- Provide guidance for professional conduct
- Verify Student’s weekly contact hours
- Complete the following on the Practicum Web site:
  - Midpoint Evaluation Form in conjunction with the Student
  - Final Site Preceptor Evaluation of the Student and Practicum
- Negotiate payment/stipend with the Student, if applicable
- Evaluate your professional behavior
- Address any reports of problems, including site safety issues and/or sexual harassment
6. **An Overview of the Applied Practice Experience**

As you engage in the practicum experience, you will find yourself going through a process that begins with thinking about what your goals and objectives will be, aligning those with a current practicum opportunity, finding a site, working with a Site Preceptor, and evaluating the practicum. A general outline of the process is as follows:

1. Think about the Applied Practice Experience
2. Prepare for the Applied Practice Experience
3. Develop the Applied Practice Experience Plan and Learning Objectives
4. Obtain Approval of the Applied Practice Experience Plan
5. Register for the Applied Practice Experience
6. Complete the Applied Practice Experience
7. Evaluate the Applied Practice Experience

**Think about the Applied Practice Experience**

The term / semester before you start your Applied Practice Experience, you should set up an appointment to meet with your Practicum Advisor to begin a dialogue regarding your goals for the Applied Practice Experience. The Practicum Advisor will guide you through the practicum. They will review the Applied Practice Experience requirements, and discuss potential sites and types of Applied Practice Experiences.

**Prepare for the Applied Practice Experience**

During this phase, you will work with the Practicum Advisor as you plan to participate in the Applied Practice Experience. The opportunity to participate in “real world” practice requires that you act in accordance with all applicable rules, regulations, and professional standards of the workplace.

If you have not already done so, you will need to develop a resume and cover letter and identify an initial set of goals that you are interested in pursuing. If you need resume help, you may contact the Milken Institute SPH Student Career Consultant. Please visit the GWSPH Career Counseling website, [http://publichealth.gwu.edu/services/career-center/counseling](http://publichealth.gwu.edu/services/career-center/counseling), to schedule an appointment.

You are expected to take a proactive role and demonstrate initiative in selecting a practicum site and Site Preceptor for the practicum. The Practicum Advisor will assist and guide you to references and established sites that reflect the programmatic focus and objectives of your MPH specialty. This can be a time-consuming so please plan accordingly. You should **begin this process no later than the term before you intend to start the practicum.** See the Student Practicum Checklist for deadline information.
Global Health/International Applied Practice Experience

If you plan to travel to conduct your Applied Practice Experience at a site that is not located in the United States, additional advance planning is required. Travel must be approved at the departmental/school and university level. You must also complete a detailed travel registration form with the Office of International Programs, that can only be accessed after you have discussed your travel plans and practicum details with your Practicum Director. As such, make sure to meet with your Practicum Director as soon as possible to outline the next steps.

Site Preceptor Qualifications

Skilled public health practitioners who are willing to serve as preceptors represent a critical component of the Applied Practice Experience. Site Preceptors should have sufficient relevant experience to mentor you and provide good learning experience enabling you to meet your learning objectives. For any specific sector of public health practice, we expect a preceptor to have either:

- A terminal degree (e.g., PhD or MD) and current, professional experience in public health;
- At least three years of full-time, professional experience in public health in addition to graduate degree in public health (MPH);
- At least five years of full-time, professional experience in public health in addition to a graduate degree (MS); or
- At least ten years of full-time, professional public health experience in addition to a bachelor’s degree.

We recognize that people come to public health from a wide variety of backgrounds, however, so if you are uncertain whether your preceptor is sufficiently qualified, please contact your practicum advisor or ask the potential preceptor to do so in order to discuss the preceptor’s qualifications. Your preceptor should not be a GW student, or recent graduate, but adjunct faculty may serve as preceptors at their places of primary employment.

All Site Preceptors are required to submit a Preceptor Profile Application if it is their first time serving in this capacity.

Site Qualifications

Eligible sites are those that offer practice settings that:

- Are commensurate with your program
- Have well-defined activities that will enable you to apply your public health knowledge and skills
- Offer the opportunity to engage with experienced Site Preceptors
- Offer a work environment conducive to the fulfillment of the GWSPH educational mission.
The location of GWSPH in Washington, DC offers the opportunity of Applied Practice Experience sites that span the spectrum of location and focus. Available sites include local community-based organizations, local and state health departments, federal agencies, and international/global agencies and consortia. The topic areas are as diverse as the settings – health care policy, women, children, and families, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, national surveys on health and well-being, refugee health, immigrant health, rural and urban health, environmental issues, and health disparities.

In addition, the growth of our online MPH program has helped us establish Applied Practice Experience sites nationally as well as internationally.

Your Applied Practice Experience may be completed at a site located in the metropolitan Washington, DC area or any area of the world. Please meet with your Applied Practice Experience Director as soon as possible if you are interested in an international Practicum Site.

**The preferred setting for an Applied Practice Experience is off campus;** the practicum must be supervised by a preceptor who is an employee of the site organization (there are certain GW-affiliated sites that may be practicum sites, such as the Medical Faculty Associates and the GW Cancer Institute). **Be sure to check with your Practicum Director/Coordinator if you have a GW-related preceptor or site in mind.**

If you wish to request an on-campus Applied Practice Experience, you must submit a request using the GWSPH Graduate Petition Form, available on the GWSPH website at [https://publichealth.gwu.edu/pdf/graduate_records_petition.pdf](https://publichealth.gwu.edu/pdf/graduate_records_petition.pdf).

**Develop the Applied Practice Experience Plan and Learning Objectives**

During this stage of the practicum process, you will work with your Site Preceptor to develop a Practicum Plan and develop your learning objectives for the practicum experience.

The Applied Practice Experience Plan will identify the following: what project you will be doing, the Applied Practice Experience site where you will complete the work, the person who will serve as the Site Preceptor, the learning objectives of the experience, a description of the activities you will undertake, and, if applicable, a timeline for student products or deliverables.

Learning objectives are statements of what you will engage in during the Applied Practice Experience or will be able to do once you have completed it. Learning objectives are measurable tasks that you and your Site Preceptor will develop prior to beginning your project. These objectives will be evaluated by your Site Preceptor at the completion of the course.
Learning objectives must:
• Connect to your program-specific Applied Practice Experience competencies (see syllabus)
• Frame your objectives as actionable, i.e. what you plan to do or accomplish during the experience
• Build your professional skills
• Be prepared with your Site Preceptor and approved by your Practicum Advisor.

Examples of appropriate learning objectives (LO) linked to competencies are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess environmental and occupational exposures.</td>
<td>Use air-monitoring equipment correctly for taking 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>

**Obtain Approval of the Applied Practice Experience Plan**

You will submit your Applied Practice Experience Plan online through the online system in Online Practicum System for Public Health. Your department Practicum Advisor and Site Preceptor will review and approve your plan before beginning work at your practicum site. The Practicum Plan review process often takes several weeks, depending on the time needed for additional reviews of the work or work site. You should plan accordingly. See Student Practicum Checklist* for details.

**Complete the Applied Practice Experience**

In this stage of the process, you will work under the guidance of your Site Preceptor to carry out the practicum in accordance with the expectations set forth in your Practicum Plan. The practicum will entail a minimum of 60 hours of fieldwork per credit hour, for a total of 120 hours for the two-credit course.
Completion Expectations for the Applied Practice Experience

• Students are expected to complete their Applied Practice Experience within the term they register for the experience.

• Students will have up to two semesters or 3 terms (online) to complete their Applied Practice Experience for credit. If circumstances (i.e., medical emergencies or other serious situations) prevent or delay a student from finishing, it is the student’s responsibility to alert their Practicum Director immediately, and to submit a petition requesting an extension.

• Failure to complete the Applied Practice Experience within two semesters or 3 terms (online) will result in the student receiving a grade of “No Credit” (NC) being placed on their record for the course.

• Should a student receive a grade of “No Credit” for the Applied Practice Experience, the student will be required to re-register for the class, pay the associated fees, and select and complete a new Practicum in order to receive credit for the class.

Evaluate the Applied Practice Experience

Two types of evaluations are required to complete the practicum: a process evaluation that will be completed during your Applied Practice Experience and an outcome evaluation that will be completed at the end of the practicum experience. You are required to maintain an hours log for the entire duration of the practicum project. Once your practicum is fully approved in Online Practicum System, you will record your weekly activities in the “Track Hours” portal. Please note you may not enter hours in bulk rather they must be entered as you accrue them.

The Midpoint Evaluation is released after a student logs 60 hours at their placement. After the student completes the Midpoint Evaluation, they should schedule a meeting with their Site Preceptor to review and discuss the content. After reviewing the Midpoint Evaluation, your Site Preceptor is required to sign off on the evaluation, your Practicum Director also must sign off on the Midpoint evaluation before you can begin to continue to log the rest of your hours. We aim to minimize the amount of time it takes for your Practicum Director to approve your Midpoint evaluation. The “Track Hours” portal will reopen after the Midpoint Evaluation has been approved by GWSPH and the site preceptor.

After logging 120 hours, you will need to complete a Final Evaluation. The Final Evaluation will ask you to evaluate the site, the Site Preceptor, and the practicum experience as a whole. Your Site Preceptor will be asked to evaluate your performance separately, as well. Your practicum experience will be reviewed for a grade of Credit or No Credit by the Practicum Director, based in part on the evaluation and recommendation of the Site Preceptor.
7. The Applied Practice Experience System in Online Practicum System for Public Health*

The Applied Practice Experience System (https://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com/) provides you with a single location for forms, policies and requirements, available opportunities, and other resources.

For an in-depth tutorial on how to use the Online practicum system, watch the practicum training videos on GWSPH Source (https://source.publichealth.gwu.edu/resources-finder/video/practice-experience-gwork-video-tutorial).

*Global Health students should visit DGH Online for more information on specific guidelines for the program.

Getting Set up in Online Practicum System

Step 1: Create Practicum Profile

1. Go to http://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com/
2. Select “Student/Alumni”
3. Login with your NetID and password. If you don’t remember your password, just click the “Forgot Password” link to reset your password.

4. Once logged in, select “Practicum” in the Shortcuts section in the lower right hand corner.
5. Fill out Practicum Application.

6. After submission, you will be taken to this screen, which indicates that your application was successfully submitted and has gone to your practicum director for review and approval.
Step 2: Search for a Practicum

1. Login at http://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com/
2. In the main navigation, select “Job Opportunities/Practicum Sites”

3. Filter for “School of Public Health Practicum” project proposals.
Step 3: Submit Project Plan

1. Login at http://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplcity.com
2. Select “Practicum” in the Shortcuts section in the lower right hand corner.
3. Click the “Submit Project Plan” button. Note: Your practicum application must be approve before you can submit a project plan.

4. Fill out project proposal form
5. In the “Employer” field, search for the appropriate practicum site. It is important to choose the correct site or the “Project Proposal” field will not populate with the correct proposal(s).
6. Choose the project proposal to which you are applying. *
*The preceptor must be registered in Online Practicum System and must have submitted a project proposal (position description) for this field to populate.

7. Submit the project plan when you have completed the form. You will then be shown the below screen, which indicates that your plan has been submitted to both your practicum director and preceptor for review and approval.
8. Once your plan has been approved by both preceptor and practicum director, you will be able to start logging hours from this screen. Please note: You will not be able to record any hours until after your plan is approved by BOTH your practicum director and preceptor.

Step 4: Tracking Hours

1. Click on “Track Hours” button shown above.
2. Report time period (day or week) and how many hours worked. Be sure to identify and describe tasks completed during each time period.
3. To add more hours, select the “Add Hours” button and additional row will be added to the table.
4. Click “Submit” to save logged hours.

Step 5: Midpoint Evaluation

1. After you have logged 60 hours, a “Midpoint Evaluation” link will appear in place of the track hours link on your practicum homepage. You will not be allowed to logged additional hours until your midpoint evaluation has been completed and approved by both preceptor and practicum director.

2. Select “Midpoint Evaluation” and fill out form
3. Be sure to copy/paste the agreed upon learning objectives from your practicum plan and then explain how you met these objectives.

4. Click “Submit” when finished with the form.
5. You will be taken to the below screen. You will NOT be able to track any more hours until your midpoint evaluation is approved by both preceptor and practicum director. Once they approve, the “Track Hours” button will reappear.
Step 6: Final Self Evaluation

1. After logging 120 hours, a link to your final self-evaluation will appear.

2. After filling out the form, your practicum director will be notified and your preceptor will be sent a notice to complete their preceptor final evaluation.

3. Once your preceptor has completed their evaluation, your practicum is complete.
8. **Relationship to the Culminating Experience**

The practicum and culminating experience are two distinct MPH curriculum requirements. However, the two experiences may be linked. The practicum is a field placement that may take on a practice or research orientation. A practice---based practicum can be developed into a central thesis theme that can be further explored within the culminating experience. Likewise, a research-based practicum can yield an intensive research investigation that is distinct from the practicum experience. The linkage between the Practicum and Culminating Experience will be further delineated in the program---specific guidelines.

The Culminating Experience is a graded course, which consists of four elements that focus on experiences from the practicum: (a) Concept Paper, (b) Proposal, (c) Final Report, and/or (d) Oral Presentation.

9. **Human Subjects Research Requirements (IRB) Research**

In addition to the CITI Online Course, you will have additional requirements if you are engaging in research involving human participants or their data.

The AP experiences may also address additional foundational or concentration-specific competencies, if appropriate. In some instances, this means that some students may choose to have their AP experiences involve research. In these circumstances, students are required to articulate the plan to engage in research activity in their AP experience plans, and will also be required to complete research questionnaires prior to beginning the work, OR in the event that the direction of the project changes.

Students who are conducting research should work closely with their department practice advisor, and review the GWSPH Research Policy and Procedure Guidance website as well as the Human Subjects Determination Policy for the school as their projects will be required to go through the SPH research oversight process and possibly the GW IRB. Note that this process can be lengthy, and we advise a minimum of 45 Days is allowed for its completion.

**We advise that research-oriented projects be discussed with practice directors/coordinators no less than 1-full term ahead of when the work will take place** (i.e. If a student wishes to start their AP experience in June 2019, they should be engaged in detailed discussions with their department practice advisor and site preceptor by mid-February 2019. This recommendation of a 3-4-month head start allows for timely completion of the process and the project starting on time).
What types of AP experience projects require completion of the Human Subjects Determination process?

Any project involving human participants in any form, for example:
1. The individuals themselves OR their data;
2. Collecting data
3. Analyzing data (this includes secondary data, that is, data that was collected by someone else)
4. Filing medical data
5. Conducting or being present when someone else interviews or surveys human participants (i.e. focus groups, interviews, surveys, biometric data collection, etc.). This includes projects where the people being interviewed/surveyed are subject-matter experts and/or being questioned only in their professional capacity.
6. A project at a site that has existing IRB approval
7. Projects at sites outside the University that involve human participants as defined in the previous categories must also be reviewed as to whether GW is involved in the research, which sometimes requires that an agreement must be developed as to which institution is in charge of supervising the project.
8. Practicum advisors work closely with the SPH and IRB experts in developing these guidelines and students should always feel free to seek feedback

In the near future, the SPH Office of Research Excellence will be launching an online portal process for these determinations. Students will receive additional instructions from their academic advisors at that time, but until then research-oriented AP Experiences will need to submit a Milken Institute SPH Student Human Subjects Research Determination Form to be prior to the initiation of any work on said project.

Student Human Subjects Research Determination Form

A human subject is defined by the GW Office of Human Research as “a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains: data through intervention or interaction with the individual or identifiable private information.”

Start this process no less than 1-full term ahead of when the work will take place, as GWSPH's Oversight team and the University’s IRB will not approve studies retroactively.
10. **Financial Compensation**

Financial compensation for the practicum, if available, is a matter to be negotiated between you and the Site Preceptor. 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. Furthermore, it is your responsibility to cover any fees that may be associated with your site (e.g., required immunizations, personal protective equipment, or travel).

11. **Professional Behavior**

An important component of the practicum is practicing appropriate professional behavior in the workplace. As such, you are expected to function as a professional at all times and are responsible for the activities and work described in your Practicum Plan.

Examples of professional behavior include:

- Dressing professionally
- Being respectful to your supervisor and coworkers (e.g., not engaging in gossip)
- Using professional language
- Being prepared for assignments and meeting project deadlines
- Arriving and departing at agreed-upon hours
- Informing your Site Preceptor of anticipated absences or delays in arrival
- Maintaining at all times, including when the practicum ends.

You should demonstrate the standard of behavior expected of other employees in the organization, including compliance with the organization’s policies and procedures. This component is evaluated by the Site Preceptor as discussed in the evaluations, and also indirectly by the Practicum Director.

12. **Petition for Practicum Equivalent Experience**

Although there are no automatic exemptions or waivers of the practicum, in **rare** situations it is possible to receive Practicum Equivalent Experience waiver. In adherence to rules and policies set by CEPH, this request can only be approved if you can provide evidence of substantial **prior** public health experience relevant to your program-specific competencies. In general, this would include **3 or more** years of relevant, full-time public health work in your discipline prior to matriculation in the MPH program.
If you wish to apply for Practicum Equivalent Experience, **file a request by petition during your first term.** This provides time to plan a practicum should prior experience not be sufficient.

To do this, complete the Practicum Equivalent Experience form on the Practicum Website. In addition to the form, you will be required to submit a copy of your resume with relevant public health workplace references, as well as a description of how your experience has demonstrated application of the program-specific competencies for the practicum.

Practical, public health relevant experience is a graduation requirement for all MPH degree candidates. When a Practicum Equivalent Experience is approved, this graduation requirement is not being waived – rather, prior equivalent experience is accepted in fulfillment of this requirement. The form must be approved by your Academic Advisor, Practicum Director, and the Office of the Dean. If you are granted Practicum Equivalent Experience, you will need to substitute the required practicum credits (typically 2) with other coursework.

**13. International Students**

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is required before international (F-1) students begin their practicum. The International Services Office (ISO) and the GW Career Center are actively involved in the CPT process.

For more information, please contact the International Services Office: Old Main Suite 205 1922 F Street, NW Washington, DC 20052
Phone: 202-994-4477 Fax: 202-994-4488
Email: iso@gwu.edu

**14. University Policy Statements**

**Practicum Site and Safety Precautions**

The George Washington University cannot guarantee the safety of practicum sites. While at your practicum site, you should take normal precautions to assure your own safety. Should you be asked to do something that you deem unsafe during a practicum experience, or if you believe that conditions at a practicum site are unsafe, you should immediately report any such safety concerns to your Site Preceptor and Practicum Director.
Sexual Harassment

The George Washington University is committed to maintaining a work and learning environment in which students, faculty, and staff are free from sexual harassment. The University’s Policy and Procedures on Sexual Harassment are posted on its web site:

http://my.gwu.edu/files/policies/SexualHarassmentFINAL.pdf If you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you should report the problem to the Site Preceptor and Practicum Director or any other University official, including the Department Chair or Dean.

University Policy on Equal Opportunity

The George Washington University does not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation. This policy covers all programs, services, policies, and procedures of the University, including admission to educational programs and employment. The University is subject to the District of Columbia Human Rights Law. Inquiries concerning the application of this policy and federal laws and regulations concerning discrimination in education or employment programs and activities may be addressed to:

Sabrina Ellis, Vice President for Human Resources https://hr.gwu.edu/department-directory or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education.
15. Contacts

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Appendix A: Checklist of Practicum Step

Student Practicum Checklist

Ideally, you should start the practicum registration process the term prior to beginning your practicum. Some organizations require additional legal procedures that can take several weeks to process. Failure to plan accordingly could delay your Practicum start date, so please get started early.

Please note - If you have more than 3 years of public health work experience PRIOR TO STARTING YOUR MPH, you may apply for a Practicum Equivalent Exemption (PEE) in your department before the end of your second term in the program. The PEE form is online at: https://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/forms

THE TERM BEFORE YOU WISH TO DO YOUR PRACTICUM:

- Read your academic department’s practicum syllabus available on GWSPH Source: https://source.publichealth.gwu.edu/students/practicum
- Review the Practicum Student Guidebook
- Ensure you are on target to complete department-specific practicum prerequisites before you start your Practicum.
- Update your resume and be clear on your research/experience interests
- Create an account in the Practicum System in Online Practicum System for Public Health
- Review available projects in the system, as well as past projects similar to what you might wish to do.
- Think about whether you will use a previously approved preceptor/site listed in the online system or whether you will need to use your network to find a site, preceptor and project.
- Meet with your Department Practicum Director to discuss your objectives & potential Practicum sites.
- Network with potential preceptors when opportunities arise
- If a suitable project is not available, arrange meetings with your Department Practicum Director, and the Associate Dean for Practice.
- Select potential practicum site(s) and Site Preceptor(s).
- If the site/site preceptor is not in the practicum system yet, direct your Site Preceptor to Online Practicum System for Public Health to apply. Site Preceptor Guidebook is available online at http://publichealth.gwu.edu/practicum/download/SP%20Guidebook.pdf
- Inquire of your Preceptor whether their organization will require any special arrangements, such as affiliation agreements or background investigations.

PLEASE NOTE: These items can take several weeks to process, so plan ahead.
● **If you are going to work at a Practicum site outside of the United States,** there are additional items you will need to complete. Please notify your Practicum Director as early as possible of your plans so they can assist you with the necessary paperwork and approvals.

**YOU’VE DONE THE NETWORKING & NOW YOU HAVE A PRACTICUM SITE:** (4-5 weeks before practicum start date)

● Complete the **CITI--- Social and Behavioral Research Stage 1 module or Biomedical course online and** save 2 copies of the certificate. ([This is the only CITI training accepted for the Practicum](#))

● Email a digital copy of your CITI training to Student Records to gwsphrecords@gwu.edu

● Once your preceptor/site has been verified in the online system, make sure they have loaded their practicum project into the system. You will need to know the name of the proposal in order to find it in the system

● Prepare a draft Practicum Plan for your departmental Practicum Director to review.

● Meet with your Department Practicum Director to discuss your objectives and your Practicum Plan.

● Find your site preceptor’s practicum project proposal in the system and link your Practicum Plan to the project. The practicum director and site preceptor will then approve and sign your plan.

**TO REGISTER FOR PRACTICUM W/ STUDENT RECORDS (3-4 weeks before practicum start date)**

**PLEASE NOTE:** These items take 5-7 business days to process. Please plan accordingly, especially if you have Financial Aid or other considerations that depend upon your course load.

● Complete a Registration Transaction Form (RTF), and have your Department Practicum Director sign it. **DO NOT USE THE RTF EZ FORM.** Forms are found online at: http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/forms

● Email the Records Department your form. The Records office will verify your RTF and send it to the University Registrar for processing.
READY TO START? (Practicum start date – end of practicum)

- You may begin to work onsite and log hours that count toward your Practicum only after:
  - You have created an account in the online practicum system
  - Your Site Preceptor and Organization/Site have been approved in the online system.
  - Your Site Preceptor has loaded your Practicum Project into the online system.
  - You have completed the required trainings such as CITI and are registered for Practicum using the RTF

- Maintain your online hour's log using the online practicum system. You must log hours as they occur.

- Update your Department Practicum Director at least twice during your time on-site (e.g., in person, telephone, email)

- Complete Midpoint Evaluation after discussion with your Site Preceptor

- Submit revised Practicum Plan to your Department Practicum Director, if applicable

- Complete the Final Student Evaluation of the Preceptor and Practicum