

## UConn Health, Department of Public Health Sciences, Master of Public Health Program

### Applied Public Health Practice Learning Experience PRACTICUM IN PUBLIC HEALTH

**Overview and Goals of the Applied Public Health Practice Learning Experience:** The applied public health practice learning experiences collectively include the Independent Practicum, Practicum in Public Health, Field Experience in Public Health Systems, and other related individual studies elective courses that largely focus on community-centered applied public health practice fieldwork.

The goals, course requirements, and criteria for all the applied public health practice learning experiences are based on the MPH Program core course, the Practicum in Public Health, which is a group, rather than individual, community-centered applied public health practice learning experience. All applied public health learning experiences, group or individual, are part of the MPH Program's aim to prepare students with the understanding, knowledge, experience, skills and values necessary to successfully function as highly competent public health practitioners and leaders.

The **organizing principles** of the applied public health practice learning experience courses are:

- *Public health practice is trans-disciplinary* - Comprehensive understanding of public health issues and effective interventions require simultaneous consideration of individual, interpersonal and environmental perspectives
- *Public health practice is a shared enterprise* - Collaboration between schools and the public health practice community is essential to assuring that all communities have access to effective principles and techniques for disease control and community improvement
- *Public health practice is orderly* - Effective interventions are predicated on sequential steps of assessment, asset mapping, planning, programming and evaluation
- *Public health practice is humanizing* - Interacting with stakeholders expands data and increases capacity for beneficial social change.

**Students' Performance Requirements and Grades:** To achieve a passing grade for the Group or Independent Practicum for Public Health, students must successfully complete the following performance requirements:

- **Students are expected to spend 135+ hours in practicum-related activities.** Hours spent in completion of course-related activities will be registered and tracked via the student's Activity Logs (see below).

Activities that count toward the 135+ hours include: Time spent on research, report writing, and working within the community, and with community-based preceptors.

Students' activities that do NOT count toward the 135+ hours include:

- Travel time to and from class, meetings, the library, field sites, and the like
- Non-productive unreasonably excessive time spent on the phone, emailing, text-messaging, conducting internet/web searches, and the like, UNLESS directly and substantively related to the project (must be documented in the Activity Logs; see below).
- **Activity Logs:** Beginning with the second week of the course, students will provide detailed information regarding the scope, extent and consequence of project activities that they undertake or complete. It is important that students carefully document all activities and estimates of committed hours. Individual activity logs are to be submitted **every week** during the semester, by Monday, 12:00 noon. Logs should include all of the following, *to the extent they are relevant to your work*:
  - A brief summary of your readings (What did you learn? Was it helpful?)
  - If communicating or meeting with project collaborators (What was accomplished?)
  - Notes from communications with stakeholders and community advocates

- Description of work performed at the field site and in the community
- Postings of references and resources, such as: Web links, bibliographic citations, summary statistics and findings, individual contact information, personal writings, observations, etc.
- **Reflections:** Students will write and submit three reflections over the course of the semester. If the student is taking the Practicum course, the reflections are uploaded via HuskyCT, if it is a Field Experience, the reflections should be emailed to Dr. Brown ([stbrown@uchc.edu](mailto:stbrown@uchc.edu)) and the student's site project preceptor. These narratives are 1-3 pages in length, are confidential and should demonstrate the student's reflections on their participation in the course/project activities. Topics for reflection include: experience working on the project, evaluation of personal and group efforts, experience interacting with other public health experts, and self assessment of personal professional growth.
- **Pre and Post Competency Assessment, Learning Objectives and SMART Goals:** Students will submit a competency self-assessment both prior to the start of their Practicum project and afterwards to ascertain their progress. They will also develop learning objectives for their Practicum and individual S.M.A.R.T. goals.
- **Final Reports:** Students are required to compile a brief (2-3 pages) written report describing their project, data, findings, observations, recommendations, and personal experience. You can think of this report as an executive summary of your work. This report is **due by Monday, the week prior to the end of the semester**.
- **Student Presentation:** Students taking the Practicum course will present their project to an assembled group of students, site preceptors, and faculty, in a format set by the course instructor and at a date/time and location to be determined. Students conducting a Field Experience will arrange an appropriate venue/date/time with their site preceptors for the presentation. In the event that a presentation is impractical, an alternative assignment can be developed by contacting the Practicum Director.
- **Course Evaluation:** Students and Site Project Preceptors will complete the evaluation forms provided to them. The forms are due by Monday, the last week of the semester.

### **Course Learning Objectives and Competencies:**

1. Identify the main components and issues of the organization, financing, and delivery of health and public health service systems at the national, state, and community levels
2. Discuss policy and legislative processes for improving the health status of populations
3. Describe federal and state regulatory programs, guidelines and authorities that control health issues
4. Apply "systems thinking" to resolving organizational problems
5. Apply the principles of program planning, development, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation to state and community public health programs and initiatives
6. Describe the role of history, social organization and structured inequality in the production of health disparities
7. Develop public health programs and strategies responsive to the diverse cultural values and traditions of the communities being served
8. Identify and engage critical stakeholders, and demonstrate skills in building effective sustainable partnerships and collaborations, that assure effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of public health programs and initiatives
9. Use information technology to access, evaluate, and interpret public health data
10. Demonstrate effective written and oral skills for communicating with different audiences in the context of professional public health activities



**Applied Public Health Practice Learning Experience**  
**PRACTICUM IN PUBLIC HEALTH LEARNING CONTRACT**

**ENDORSEMENTS**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Complete for all that apply to your project**

1. **MPH Program Course Instructor:** I approve the proposed applied public health project, described in the attached summary, as a valuable applied practice learning experience that conforms to the learning objectives and competencies criteria for the Practicum in Public Health course.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

2. **DPH Course Instructor** (NOTE: Only required for the Field Experience in Public Health at CT DPH): I approve the proposed applied public health project described in the attached summary as a valuable applied practice learning experience that conforms to the course learning objectives and competencies criteria for the Field Experience in Public Health.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

3. **Site Project Preceptor:** I approve of the proposed applied public health project, described in the attached summary, as a useful project for my affiliated agency/program. I agree to work with the student while he/she completes the proposed activities. Upon completion of the proposed scope of work, I will submit a brief written evaluation of the student's performance and experience in applied public health practice.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date