

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EXERCISE SCIENCE
AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL OF APPLIED SCIENCES
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS
PUBLIC HEALTH MANUAL
FOR THE
Bachelor of Science in Public Health and Health Sciences
(PHHS)



OVERVIEW

All Public Health and Health Sciences (PHHS) students are required to complete a Public Health Practical experience during their PHHS Program at the University of Mississippi. This experience provides students with an opportunity to apply public health concepts and skills in a practical setting under the guidance of a trained professional. The supervised practicum assists students in making the transition from the university setting to the applied work setting. Furthermore, the practicum helps students adapt more readily to the professional roles they may assume after graduation. The purpose of this manual is to clarify the procedures of the practicum and to outline the specific responsibilities of the student, the faculty supervisor, the health agency, and the agency supervisor.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICAL

1. Understand the organization and functioning of agencies in public health and community settings.
2. Learn how the agency fits into the public health services system.
3. Acquire an understanding of the public health problem(s) addressed by the agency.
4. Learn skills in establishing and maintaining relationships with agency staff and clients, including persons of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
5. Gain an understanding of the organization, administration, and activities of public health agencies.
6. Improve professional skills through on-the-job applied practice.
7. Assume specific responsibilities related to the planning, implementing, administering, and/or evaluating of a specific part of the agency's programming.

THE ROLE OF THE AGENCY

1. Provide opportunities for the student to engage with clients, services, and community resources in professional setting.
2. Provide opportunities for students to practice skills related to public health, health promotion, and health education.
3. Provide opportunities to integrate public health knowledge and practice toward the development of community health services, programs, and resources.
4. Provide opportunities to network within the public health profession.
5. Provide models of professional competence.
6. Provide opportunities for meaningful work related to community and/or public health that promotes professional growth for the student.
7. Communicate with the faculty supervisor/practicum coordinator as needed regarding any concerns.

THE ROLE OF THE AGENCY SUPERVISOR

1. Orient the student to the agency and make agency materials available to the student.
2. Introduce the student to broad issues, trends, and problems in public health so they may gain perspective of the larger system in which the agency operates.
3. Plan, organize, and coordinate activities and learning experiences for the student so that s/he will understand the total function of the agency.
4. Assist the student in the development of a contract that specifies projects or activities the student will be responsible for during the course of the practicum.
5. Help the student in planning, organizing, and implementing duties as specified in practicum contract.
6. Allow the student to participate and observe agency events and situations including interviews and staff meetings.
7. Monitor the student as they complete tasks and engage with community members.
8. Discuss policies, roles, and activities in formal and informal supervisory sessions.
9. Complete mid-term and final evaluation forms on student performance.
10. Inform the student of steps s/he should take to develop strengths and improve areas of growth.
11. Monitor student completion of the required number of hours and at least two tangible products during the practicum experience.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

1. Learn and observe agency procedures, policies, and activities.
2. Develop a practicum contract detailing specific projects and activities for which the student will be responsible for (see attached Practicum Contract).
3. Ask for assistance and supervision when needed to assure that all projects and assignments are appropriately completed.
4. Inform the agency supervisor when s/he will be late or absent.
5. Complete a log (see sample Practicum Log Sheet) and submit on a bi-weekly basis to the faculty supervisor.
6. Complete the Student Self-Assessment Form and the Agency Evaluation Form and return them to the faculty supervisor by the last week of the semester.
7. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the rules of the agency. The student may be reassigned or asked to take time off until the next semester if the agency or faculty supervisor determines that the student has difficulty functioning in a particular practicum setting.
8. Complete a Final Practicum Report of the experience, which includes at least two products completed as part of the practicum and a 5-page paper reflecting on the practicum experience overall.

THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY SUPERVISOR

The faculty supervisor operates as a liaison between the university and the agency. Periodic contacts between the faculty supervisor and the agency supervisor help to maintain a focus on the student throughout the practicum experience. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Assist the student in identifying placement opportunities.
2. Approve the practicum contract developed by the student and the agency.
3. Provide opportunities for the student to discuss his/her experiences as necessary.
4. Review student logs to assure that the practicum is providing an appropriate learning experience.
5. Address any academic or practicum-related problem that may develop between the student and the agency.
6. Evaluate student performance and submit a grade to university.

PLANNING TIMELINE FOR THE PRACTICUM IN PUBLIC HEALTH

All PHHS students at the University of Mississippi must complete PH 470: Practical Applications in Public Health. This is a professional internship/field experience in an applied setting. Each student will register for 3 semester hours. The practicum has a 200-hour minimum requirement; translated to approximately 14 hours per week over 15 weeks (fall/spring) or about 23 hours per week over 9 weeks (summer). Ideally, students will complete the practicum during the summer.

**In some cases, PH 470 may be taken twice or registered for 6 hours.

PRACTICUM PLANNING

1. The semester **before** you plan to enroll in PH 470, submit the Public Health Practical proposal form.
2. Students can find their practicum placements through networking, word-of-mouth, or speaking with the faculty supervisor/practicum coordinator.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHOOSING A PRACTICUM SITE

In selecting a practicum site, there are a number of questions for the student to consider.

These include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Does the organization offer opportunities to help you achieve your learning goals? This "best fit" approach is intended to provide you with field experience and insight into the daily activities of your chosen interest area.
2. Will this placement expand your knowledge and facilitate professional growth and development?
3. What new skills will you develop?

4. Who are the clients and communities served by the organization?
5. What types of services and programs does the organization offer? In other words, what health concerns and problems are addressed?
6. What specific project(s) will you be involved in? Are you enthusiastic about these projects?
7. Will you primarily work behind the scenes or directly with community members?

PRACTICUM CONTRACT

By the end of the first week, the student and agency supervisor should establish a written contract to include:

- A. Work schedule (including hours per week)
- B. List of practicum objectives for the student
- C. Specific practicum activities and responsibilities
- D. Procedures for reviewing weekly logs

PRACTICUM APPROVAL

The completed contract must be discussed and approved by the faculty supervisor.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Every two weeks, students turn in two weekly logs to the faculty supervisor.

MID-TERM EVALUATION

The student and the agency supervisor review the mid-term evaluation completed by the agency supervisor. The completed evaluation is then sent to the faculty supervisor.

FINAL PRACTICUM REPORT

By the end of semester, the student is responsible for submitting the following to the faculty supervisor:

- A. All weekly work logs
- B. Self-assessment of the practicum experience
- C. Health agency evaluation form
- D. Final evaluation by the agency supervisor
- E. Copy of at least two products completed as part of the practicum
- F. 5-page paper reflecting on the practicum experience overall

PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Phone: _____ **Student ID #:** _____

Transportation available to practicum site? _____

Address: _____

PROFESSIONAL GOALS:

DESCRIBE THE TYPE OF PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE YOU SEEK:

PRACTICUM SITES CONSISTENT WITH YOUR PROFESSIONAL GOALS:

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Public Health Practical Contract

Agency: _____

Address: _____ **Phone:** _____

This contract outlines the specific activities the student will be involved in during the course of the practicum.

1. Schedule (Hours/Days of Week):

2. Activities:

3. Responsibilities:

Any significant change in scope of work must be discussed with all parties involved, and the contract must be amended accordingly.

Student **Phone** **Date**

Agency Supervisor **Phone** **Date**

Faculty Supervisor **Phone** **Date**

**WEEKLY PRACTICUM LOG
PUBLIC HEALTH
(Sample)**

Student: _____ **Agency:** _____

Week #/Dates: _____

Hours Worked: M _____ T _____ W _____ Th _____ F _____

Activities

1. *Met with supervisor to develop recruitment strategy for smoking cessation program.*
2. *Conducted literature search on effective smoking cessation programs.*
3. *Contacted 10 local businesses to identify possible sites.*
4. *Attended a planning meeting on upcoming budget review.*
5. *Met with committee for planning the annual health conference.*

Observations

1. *Planning for the conference requires more lead-time than I thought.*
2. *Three of the ten businesses contacted are potentially interested.*
3. *Some companies felt they were doing enough for employee health.*
4. *Many smoking cessation programs available- need to choose most feasible one.*

Planning for Next Week

1. *Meet with personnel department of each interested company.*
2. *Meet with supervisor to select smoking cessation program.*
3. *Contact guest speakers for conference.*
4. *Make reservations for conference meeting rooms and A/V equipment.*

**WEEKLY PRACTICUM LOG
PUBLIC HEALTH**

Student: _____

Agency: _____

Week #/Dates: _____

Hours Worked: M _____ T _____ W _____ Th _____ F _____

Activities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Observations

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Planning for Next Week

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
Public Health Program**

MID-TERM AGENCY ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Student Name:	
Agency Supervisor:	
Title:	
Agency:	
Agency Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone:	
Dates of Placement:	

Please evaluate the student's performance by placing a check in the appropriate boxes, basing your responses on the work that you have observed the student participating in.

KNOWLEDGE:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Of the scientific basis for public health					
Of methods to assess & analyze health needs of the community/target population					
Of appropriate theories/models of behavior change					
Of individual, small, and/or large group health strategies					
Of relevant public health policies and practices at the state, federal, and local level					
Of community resources					
Of models for designing and implementing community or public health programs					
Of effective management practices such as planning, budgeting, marketing, staffing					
Of effective methods of program evaluation					

MIDTERM AGENCY ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

SKILLS

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Able to identify problems/assess client interest and need					
Formulates educational and service goals and objectives					
Selects educational or service strategies to meet the situation					
Delivers services, programs, and/or resources effectively to clients					
Makes optimal use of available services/resources					
Develops measures to evaluate programs effectively					
Prepares appropriate reports/maintenance records					
Plans and organizes time effectively					
Accomplishes assigned tasks with minimum supervision					
Makes sound decisions, using good judgment and common sense					
Produces accurate, thorough work					
Expresses self well in oral and written work					
Follows policies and procedures					
Other comments					

RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF/CLIENTS

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Works harmoniously with professional colleagues					
Works harmoniously with clerical staff					
Works harmoniously with representatives of other agencies					
Participates effectively in group situations					
Able to communicate effectively with clients					
Other comments					

MIDTERM AGENCY ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

PERSONAL TRAITS AND ATTITUDES

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Possesses emotional stability and maturity					
Is mentally active and attentive					
Shows leadership qualities					
Shows interest and enthusiasm for assigned activities					
Recognizes own strengths and weaknesses					
Responds positively to supervision					
Other comments					

POTENTIAL

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Shows potential to become an effective agency employee					
Has potential for contributing to the profession					
Has potential for supervisory and administrative work					
Other comments					

RECOMMENDED GRADE

Circle one: A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D F

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
Public Health Program**

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

Student Name:	
Agency Supervisor:	
Title:	
Agency:	
Agency Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone:	
Dates of Placement:	

Please evaluate your performance by placing a check in the appropriate boxes, basing your responses on the work that you have accomplished rather than what you may be able to do.

KNOWLEDGE:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Of the scientific basis for public health					
Of methods to assess & analyze health needs of the community/target population					
Of appropriate theories/models of behavior change					
Of individual, small, and/or large group health strategies					
Of relevant public health policies and practices at the state, federal, and local level					
Of community resources					
Of models for designing and implementing community or public health programs					
Of effective management practices such as planning, budgeting, marketing, staffing					
Of effective methods of program evaluation					

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

SKILLS

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Able to identify problems/assess client interest and need					
Formulates educational and service goals and objectives					
Selects educational or service strategies to meet the situation					
Delivers services, programs, and/or resources effectively to clients					
Makes optimal use of available services/resources					
Develops measures to evaluate programs effectively					
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Accomplishes assigned tasks with minimum supervision					
Makes sound decisions, using good judgment and common sense					
Produces accurate, thorough work					
Expresses self well in oral and written work					
Follows policies and procedures					
Other comments					

RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF/CLIENTS

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Works harmoniously with professional colleagues					
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Participates effectively in group situations					
Able to communicate effectively with clients					
Other comments					

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
Public Health Program**

**HEALTH AGENCY EVALUATION FORM
(To be completed by the student)**

Student Name:	
Agency Supervisor:	
Title:	
Agency:	
Agency Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone:	
Dates of Placement:	

NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK: _____

1. Description of duties and responsibilities:

2. Did this practicum provide you with a good applied learning experience?

A. What experiences/activities were most helpful? Why?

B. What experiences/activities were least helpful? Why?

3. Do you feel you received adequate supervision and guidance from your agency supervisor?

4. What feedback or recommendations do you have to improve the practicum experience at this placement site?

5. Would you recommend that other students complete their practicum at this site?

6. Other comments:

**UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
Public Health Program**

FINAL AGENCY ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Student Name:	
Agency Supervisor:	
Title:	
Agency:	
Agency Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone:	
Dates of Placement:	

Please evaluate the student's performance by placing a check in the appropriate boxes, basing your responses on the work that you have observed the student participating in.

KNOWLEDGE:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
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Of effective methods of program evaluation					

FINAL AGENCY ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

SKILLS

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Able to identify problems/assess client interest and need					
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Has potential for contributing to the profession					
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Signature: _____ **Date:** _____