

# Changes to SPTHM Applied Practice Experience (Practicum) for Spring and Summer 2020

The goal of the practicum is for students to gain practice experience and demonstrate the foundational and program competencies in a practice setting. There will be flexibility in how this requirement may be done.

## What remains the same:

- Practicum is focused on public health practice (not research oriented)
- Five foundation and program competencies achieved
- Students produce a report or a product from practicum activities
- The practicum is a substantial activity as reflected in the time spent and reported
- Students enter the practicum objectives and final product into Terra Dotta
- Assessments at completion: self- assessment, advisor assessment, preceptor assessment (if you have a preceptor)
- The practicum provides benefit to the host organization or agency

See official CEPH 2016 criteria at end of this document. We adopted these for Fall, 2018.

## Updates from 2016 CEPH practicum criteria (see CEPH D5 criteria below)

The type of activities may take many forms that provide practice experiences:

- The practicum may be done at one site or may be spread over time and at multiple sites
- Service and volunteer opportunities
- Practice activity external to the university; may also be a practice experience within the university if focused on community engagement with community partner, university health promotion or wellness center.

CEPH Examples of the products produced in practica include: written reports of practice experience; journal entries and reflections of practice experience; projects in practice settings; videos and multi-media presentations; spreadsheets and data analyses; websites built for practice partners; posters, photos or other digital artifacts of learning. Student may do a portfolio that compiles a series of practice-based activities: must have at least 2 products with assessment of competencies. CEPH criteria have more flexibility than has been traditionally used. Still may not be work on a research project.

## Adjusting the practicum in the COVID-19 environment for Spring 2020 and Summer 2020

### Overarching Guidance:

- The practicum must keep the practice-focus, but may be amended to account for pandemic conditions and guidance. Changes must be approved by your advisor.
- For the Spring and Summer 2020, your advisor may serve as your preceptor if you do not have a practice preceptor.
- Follow national guidelines to use social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to help mitigate the pandemic.
  - Use social distancing: Avoid interactions with groups of people! This limits your exposure to COVID-19 as well as helps to prevent you spreading the disease to others as an asymptomatic carrier.
  - Revise your practicum to incorporate activities that allow you to use online tools, electronic meetings, and data sources. Build in social distancing to follow guidelines to minimize the spread of the virus.
- Avoid travel (international or domestic) – revise practicum to your location.

### The type of activities in a practicum may need to be changed:

- *Current practicum:* if a current practicum cannot be completed or involves fieldwork and/or interactions with groups, the plan should be changed.
  - The part of the practicum already completed and time counts. You may add another activity if needed to complete it. Examples of options listed below may be substituted for remainder of practicum. Include all activities in your practicum report.
  - Incorporate social distancing guidance.
- *Setting up a new practicum:* May keep planned objectives of applying program competencies to a practice problem, but develop a plan that you can do on your own using electronic sources and online to keep social distancing.

- Required presentations are waived; products (posters, videos, reports) should be submitted.
- The product needs to be a substantial piece of work and show thought in applying your program competencies to practice. This may be done by counting hours (200 hours) or by the complexity, impact and/or volume of the product. Examples: if a written paper, it should be a minimum of 25 pages; an edited video, the production of which is equivalent to 200 hours; data analysis and report equivalent to 200 hours.
- Activities can be flexible: the practicum needs to have an applied practice focus and should not be a research project. Examples might include:
  - Paper addressing practice issues on a public health problem
  - Review of practice literature to identify best practices of a public health problems
  - Analysis of existing data sources related to a practice problem, such as assessment of program design, monitoring and evaluation data to support continuous learning and adapting by programs, secondary data analysis related to public health practice
  - A video that could be used by a practice organization or agency
  - An online training course/module
  - Reflections of public health practice impact of a volunteer and service activity (e.g., preparing or delivering meals to the elderly – how this impacts public health and your reflection on how this helped elderly)

The range of activities to obtain practice experience and demonstrating competencies can be done in many types of activities. Use your imagination; but keep the focus on public health practice related to your program competencies.

***Make sure you enter your practicum and/or amended plan into Terra Dotta.***

**What a practicum cannot be:**

- Research in a laboratory
- Etiological research related to causal mechanisms, or research related only to wider scientific knowledge

### **For Students**

- Discuss your ideas with your faculty advisor – develop a practice-focused practicum plan.
- Your advisor may serve as the preceptor for Spring and Summer 2020, if your activity is not in a public health agency or organization or the agency/organization personnel cannot supervise your practicum.
- If you are unsure of whether you should revise your practicum, reach out to your advisor for guidance on how to handle your circumstances.
- Complete the self-assessment in Terra Dotta.

### **For Advisors**

You may approve a wide range of activities for the practicum activity; but it must be practice-oriented and include social distancing. Non-practice focused projects cannot be counted as fulfilling this requirement for graduation irrespective of your approval. Be flexible and creative: expand the types of activities that can serve as practica. Complete the assessment in Terra Dotta. If serving as advisor and preceptor, only do one.

### **Reference**

- CEPH 2016 Criteria
- D5. MPH Applied Practice Experiences (SPH and PHP)

MPH students demonstrate competency attainment through applied practice experiences.

Applied practice experiences may be concentrated in time or may be spread throughout a student's enrollment.

Opportunities may include the following:

- a practicum or internship completed during a summer or academic term
- course-based activities (e.g., performing a needed task for a public health or health care organization under the supervision of a faculty member as an individual or group of students)
- activities linked to service learning, as defined by the program, school, or university
- co-curricular activities (e.g., service and volunteer opportunities, such as those organized by a student association)
- a blend of for-credit and/or not-for-credit activities

Applied practice experiences may involve governmental, nongovernmental, nonprofit, industrial and for-profit settings, or appropriate university-affiliated settings. To be appropriate for applied practice experience activities, university-affiliated

settings must be primarily focused on community engagement, typically with external partners. University health promotion or wellness centers may also be appropriate.

The school or program identifies sites in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of the agencies or organizations involved. Activities meeting the applied practice experience should be mutually beneficial to both the site and the student.

The applied practice experience allows each student to demonstrate attainment of at least five competencies, of which at least three must be foundational competencies (as defined in Criterion D2). The competencies need not be identical from student to student, but the applied experiences must be structured to ensure that all students complete experiences addressing at least five competencies, as specified above. The applied experiences may also address additional foundational or concentration-specific competencies if appropriate.

The school or program assesses each student's competency attainment in practical and applied settings through a portfolio approach, which demonstrates and allows assessment of competency attainment. It must include at least two products. Examples include written assignments, journal entries, completed tests, projects, videos, multi-media presentations, spreadsheets, websites, posters, photos, or other digital artifacts of learning. Materials may be produced and maintained (either by the school or program or by individual students) in any physical or electronic form chosen by the school or program.

The materials may originate from multiple experiences (e.g., applied community-based courses and service learning courses throughout the curriculum) or a single, intensive experience (e.g., an internship requiring a significant time commitment with one site). While students may complete experiences as individuals or as groups in a structured experience, each student must present documentation demonstrating individual competency attainment.

Combined degree students have opportunities to integrate and apply their learning from both degree programs through applied practice experiences.

The school or program structures applied practice experience requirements to support its mission and students' career goals, to the extent possible.