

PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICUM AND SUPERVISED RESEARCH PROJECT

Students who have no prior experience in the health field and/or public health may find a practicum or a supervised research project very helpful. These courses are usually taken early in the MPH program and may be used to satisfy requirements for concentration electives or public health electives. The courses are highly individualized and must be developed in collaboration with your Supervisory Committee Chair in light of requirements for your particular concentration. These courses do not replace the required Special Project, described later in this handbook.

PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICUM (PHC 6945)

Purpose: To enable public health students to gain familiarity with a variety of public health problems, programs, policies, issues, and service delivery settings.

Description: A public health practicum is arranged for students who desire to learn more about the practice of public health in any of its multifaceted forms. This course is especially helpful to students who have no experience in the field and would benefit from knowledge acquired in a “hands-on,” observational manner. The course may be taken during any semester of the MPH program.

Objectives: At the completion of the Public Health Practicum, the student will be able to:

1. Describe how selected public health principles apply to selected practice settings, and
2. Demonstrate professional work habits.

Course Design: This is a variable credit course (1-6) reflecting the number of hours the student is engaged at the practicum site. A maximum of 20 hours per week is acceptable at one site. The course may be repeated to a maximum of 6 credits.

Requirements:

To begin a practicum...

1. Discuss the appropriateness of a practicum with your Supervisory Committee Chair.
2. Submit the *Proposal for Practicum/Supervised Research Project Form* delineating the goals for the practicum experience to the Supervisory Committee Chair and the Assistant Director of Public Health programs at least 2 weeks before the practicum is due to start. Goals must incorporate general public health principles and/or skills relevant to the specialization area of the student.
3. Obtain authorization from the site and identification of the on-site supervisor at least 2 weeks prior to engaging in activities at the practicum site.

During the practicum...

4. Maintain a log of hours worked, signed by the on-site supervisor.

Upon completion of the practicum...

5. Complete a brief report (not more than 5 pages) describing the manner and extent to which goals for the practicum were met.
6. Request that your on-site supervisor complete the *Evaluation Form*.

Grading: This course is graded as pass/fail (S/U). Grades are based on evaluation of performance by the on-site supervisor, evaluation of the final paper, and completion of the agreed upon hours of service.

SUPERVISED RESEARCH PROJECT (PHC 6917)

Purpose: This course provides students with the opportunity to learn about contemporary areas of public health research.

Description: Supervised research projects provide students with opportunities to assist in ongoing research under the supervision of a faculty member. This course is especially helpful to students who have no experience in research but a desire to pursue a research career. The course may be taken during any semester of the MPH program.

Objectives: At the completion of the Supervised Research Project, students will:

1. Demonstrate basic research skills in the design and/or development of research projects addressing public health or related areas;
2. Understand how to identify potential data sources and collect appropriate information from those sources;
3. Demonstrate basic skills in working with data and databases; and
4. Demonstrate skills in interpreting and critiquing research literature and its relevance to current research.

Course Design: This is a variable credit course (1-6) repeatable to a maximum of 6 credits. The length and intensity of the applied supervised research project determines the credit hours.

Requirements:

To begin a supervised research project...

1. Obtain agreement from a faculty mentor and approval by your Supervisory Committee prior to registering for the supervised research course.
2. Develop a research proposal outline, which clearly delineates the research aspects in which you will be involved.
3. Develop a contract with the faculty member that specifies course requirements, evaluation methods to be used to assess your progress, and timeline for project completion.
4. Submit the *Proposal for Practicum/Supervised Research Project Form* to your Supervisory Committee Chair, the faculty mentor, and the Assistant Director of Public Health Programs.
5. Sign a formal contract within the first two weeks of the course delineating these components. Changes to this contract must be documented and signed.

During the project...

6. Participate in a formal evaluation session with your mentor minimally at about mid-term in order to receive feedback and modify the project as needed.

Upon completion of the project...

7. Complete a brief report (no more than 5 pages) describing the manner and extent to which the research was completed.
8. Request that your mentor complete the *Evaluation Form*.

Grading: This course is graded as Pass/Fail (S/U). Criteria for a passing grade are specified in the contract with the student. Grades are assigned by the faculty mentor.