# TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

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### Department *of* Public Health

# Department of Public Health

# Master of Public Health Program

# Applied Practice Experience

# Handbook

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# Applied Practice Experience, Master of Public Health

## Introduction

### General

The Applied Practice Experience (APE) is a requirement for the **Master of Public Health Degree at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center**. As in all accredited programs and schools of public health, MPH students must complete an approved, planned, and supervised APE, by engaging in hands-on training with experts in community-based, non-profit, international, or other public health settings. The APE is an integral component of professional training in public health, enabling students to observe and learn from professionals in the field and to apply theoretical learning toward the achievement of practical goals and skills under the supervision of a community preceptor and APE faculty advisor. The APE handbook describes policies, processes, and responsibilities for MPH students, preceptors, and faculty advisors to aid in the fullfillment of the APE.

Students are responsible for initiating the APE process by consulting with their academic advisor, other program faculty, or the APE Director. Ultimately, students will choose the faculty advisor, preceptor, and site. Students will develop objectives and select competencies with the aid of their preceptor and faculty advisor. Students are responsible for obtaining necessary approvals and completing all relevant forms, as detailed in the handbook below. If you have questions or concerns, or need information, please contact the APE director, by referring to *Contact Information* in ***Appendix A***.

### What defines an APE?

The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) defines an APE as **the completion of *at least* two of the following products**, including "written assignments, journal entries, completed tests, projects, videos, multi-media presentations, spreadsheets, websites, posters, photos, or other digital artifacts of learning."

Each APE completed for the TTUHSC DPH must include at least one written product. Further, each student APE should include a presentation, often to the Department of Public Health near the conclusion of the APE, although presentations at conferences or to community stakeholders may substitute for a departmental presentation. Further detail on the presentation can be found below.

APE objectives, timeline, and products (as defined above) should be outlined in the learning agreement, and agreed upon by student, faculty advisor, and preceptor at the beginning of the APE.

### Objectives

The principle objectives of the APE include:
- Apply knowledge, techniques, and skills acquired during coursework;
- Provide students with practical experience in an applied public health and/or community health setting;
- Develop and apply skills in public health;
- Provide students with an opportunity to learn how one particular organization functions; and
- Allow students to test drive and explore a career choice in public health

**Prerequisites**

- Students may begin the APE after completing the required core courses (Introduction to Biostatistics, Introduction to Epidemiology, Basic Environmental Health Sciences, Management and Policy Sciences, Introduction to Social and Behavioral Sciences)
- Be in good academic standing, with a minimum 3.0 overall GPA
- Have an APE site, preceptor, and project approved by a chosen APE faculty advisor prior to registration and the planned APE start date.
- Students must be eligible to register for the APE the semester they begin the APE.
- Students wishing to begin the APE before completion of the 5 core courses must submit an APE Prerequisite Waiver form, approved by their faculty advisor, the APE Director, and the Dept. Chair

Students should begin APE planning 2-3 months prior to the semester in which they plan to enroll in the APE, including meeting with potential faculty advisor(s) and preceptor to discuss scope and objectives of the project, and managing logistics or approvals with the APE Director. Students must plan ahead financially for the APE and consider that they may or may not be able to work full-time while conducting the APE. Students must register and pay fees for the APE course just as for any other course.

## Choosing an APE

The student has the ultimate responsibility, with guidance from faculty and staff, to secure an APE site and preceptor. Students can initiate their APE search in a number of ways. A common starting point is to set up an individual meeting with a prospective faculty advisor or the APE Director to discuss the student's interests. The Department of Public Health Web site also works keep an updated list of potential organizations on the "Applied Practice Experience Opportunities" page. Students may also become aware of opportunities through personal and/or professional contacts, involvement with professional associations such as the SOPHE (Society of Public Health Professionals), the TPHA (Texas Public Health Association) and TRHA (Texas Rural Health Association); the NRHA (National Rural Health Association); and the APHA (American Public Health Association), or through other TTUHSC contacts, such as the West Texas Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program staff.

The APE may involve governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industry, and for-profit settings or appropriate university-affiliated settings. To be appropriate for APE 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.

Opportunities may include the following:

- Partnering with the local health department or other community focused organization to carry out a predetermined project, such as performing a needs assessment, creating patient education information, creating a policy brief for a specific audience, or otherwise disseminating public health related information to an appropriate demographic.
- An APE 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 an APE-approved faculty member as an individual or group of students) within the same semester the student is registered for the APE. An APE developed in a course should have clear parameters that define the project beyond the basic course requirements, as one should not "double count" the same activity for a course and for the APE.
- 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

**National Organizations as Potential APE Sites**
Numerous national organizations such as the NIH (National Institutes for Health), the CDC (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention), and the HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) offer summer internships and post graduate fellowships. Students should be aware that the application process may begin several months in advance. Students seeking potential APE opportunities should plan ahead to research deadlines for national programs. The ASPPH (Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health) Web site, www.aspph.org, provides links to several national opportunities.

**APE Course Requirements**

Before starting the APE:
- Placement with a designated preceptor in local, state, federal, private, or international organizations that address significant public health problems.
- Submission of a fully executed *Affiliation Agreement* prior to the start of the APE (Affiliation Agreement is handled by the APE Director, although student should coordinate contact between proposed preceptor and APE Director to facilitate the process).
- APE faculty advisor approval of the APE *Learning Agreement*. The Applied Practice Experience *Learning Agreement* should include at least 5 foundational competencies from Appendix B.
- Submission of the signed *Applied Practice Learning Experience* form to the APE Director prior to start of APE.
- Determine in advance if APE requires IRB or QIRB approval
  - Completion of IRB (Institutional Review Board) or QIRB (Quality Improvement Review Board) submission and obtain approval prior to beginning the APE if necessary.
- Submission of an approved APE *Learning Agreement* to the APE director.
- Registration for APE Course: GSPH 5319. Make sure the correct campus location is selected.

Completing the APE

- Completion of *at least* two of the following products (as per CEPH requirements), including "written assignments, journal entries, completed tests, projects, videos, multi-media presentations, spreadsheets, websites, posters, photos, or other digital artifacts of learning." The type of products to be produced should be outlined in the learning agreement, and agreed upon by student, faculty advisor, and preceptor at the beginning of the APE.
- Complete a Midpoint evaluation approximately halfway through the APE process
- Submit preceptor, faculty, and student evaluations at the completion of the APE
- Submission of all materials associated with the two products created for the APE and a one page summary article of the APE for the TTUHSC MPH Web site
- If not otherwise part of the APE process, students must present their APE to the Dept. of Public Health either as a scheduled presentation or during a class. Students who present at a conference or to another forum (e.g., community stakeholders) may count this as their required presentation.

**Registration**
Students will be registered for GSPH 5319 once they have submitted their signed APE Learning Agreement with written attachment to the APE Director, and the APE Director receives the signed APE Affiliation Agreement from the organization. If all of the aforementioned paperwork is completed before the semester in which the student is enrolled in the APE, the student may start APE activities with preceptor and faculty advisor approval. Students cannot register for the course on their own.

# The APE Process

Planning and Preparing for the APE
Most full-time students complete the core courses in their first two semesters, and frequently begin the APE in their third term in the program (e.g., most Fall cohorts begin APE the following summer). Students are first introduced to the APE during new student orientation. The APE orientation is a good introduction to the APE and offers an overview of the requirements and expectations. APE orientations are held in the spring semester for full time students and as needed for others, and are mandatory for all MPH students. Students unable to attend the APE orientation should contact the APE director for additional information.

The APE Handbook and Web site http://www.ttuhsc.edu/graduate-school-of-biomedical-sciences/public-health/default.aspx provide critical information regarding the APE. The Web site contains all the forms related to and required for the APE. Students are responsible for making certain the required forms are completed and submitted to the APE office by designated deadlines.

## APE Site Criteria
The APE site must meet the following criteria:

- The site must be an organization, agency or community health center engaged in public health activities, allowing the student to develop skills or competencies included in the academic program (e.g. program planning, evaluation, management, interpretation and application of statistical analysis, policy development).
- The organization provides a preceptor willing and able to spend regularly scheduled time with the student to provide guidance.
- The organization exhibits willingness to gradually increase student responsibility and independence over the duration of the APE.
- The organization makes work space and resources available, as appropriate, with the possibility to do field work or conduct field visits offsite.
- The site is a good match with the needs of the student and offers a valuable learning experience for the student.

## APE Roles and Responsibilities

### *Preceptor Roles*

The preceptor is the person at the APE site who agrees to mentor the student and oversee the day-to-day activities and projects the student is involved in. The preceptor should have expertise in assigned project areas, experience and status within the organization, and the ability and desire to supervise and mentor a student.

- The MPH program expects the preceptor to designate appropriate tasks that meet the agency's needs, address the learning objectives and public health competencies, as well as provide opportunities for student growth and leadership in the field of public health.
- The preceptor must commit sufficient time for supervision and instruction. This includes time for brief meetings as needed from day to day and for weekly supervision of at least one hour.
- The preceptor may choose to establish a funding mechanism for travel and other expenses if required for the student's project.
- The preceptor is required to submit an evaluation of the students' performance at the conclusion of the Applied Practice Experience.

*Student Responsibilities*

During the APE, the preceptor is responsible for the student while at the organization. Professionalism should be reflected in projects and activities performed by the student and in the relationships with administrators and other staff members at the APE site. As the APE progresses, any changes to the goals, activities, or schedule should be submitted in an updated learning agreement, discussed with advisor, preceptor and submitted to the APE Director.

Throughout the APE, students should keep their preceptor, APE faculty advisor, and the APE director informed as to the progress of their APE as well as any obstacles they may encounter.

*Student Responsibilities: Preceptor and Site*

- Be professional in appearance and conduct.
- Have an initial meeting with the preceptor to discuss expectations including dress code and attendance.
- Adhere to the schedule predetermined with the preceptor.
- Be punctual, and notify the preceptor as soon as possible if the student will be late or absent.
- Practice professional courtesy when communicating with clients and other health professionals.
- Clearly identify self as a student when interacting with the public or other health professionals.
- Keep the preceptor and faculty advisor informed of progress.
- Actively seek feedback and incorporate suggestions into performance improvements
- Ask for additional responsibilities when appropriate.
- Produce quality products for organization as defined in the Learning Agreement
- Evaluate the APE at the end of the experience and review the evaluation with the preceptor.
- Send the preceptor a thank you note at the end of the APE.

*APE Faculty Advisor Roles*

Faculty connections with the community may lead to potential APE opportunities for students. **Students may select any member of the Department of Public Health faculty to serve as their APE faculty advisor**, ideally selecting the faculty person with expertise most appropriate for the student's area of interest. Students should establish a relationship with an APE faculty advisor to discuss potential topics, sites, and preceptors, all with attention toward their ultimate career goals. Faculty may distribute opportunities for potential APE projects via the department student email list, or may provide targeted opportunities for students based on specific interests.

- The APE faculty advisor works with each student to help arrange an appropriate assignment that includes the selection of a qualified preceptor and APE site
- The APE faculty advisor, in consultation with the preceptor, assists the student in developing an appropriate project with clearly defined objectives
- The APE faculty advisor is responsible for deciding, along with the student, if an IRB or QIRB submission is appropriate.
  - Instances where IRB is appropriate include use of data from varied research methods including surveys, interviews, and observation; or use of private information, such as medical, family, or employment information that can be readily identified with individuals. If students have questions regarding whether an IRB is appropriate, go to the following Web site and click on the APE Process and Forms link: http://www.ttuhsc.edu/graduate-school-of-biomedical-sciences/public-health/default.aspx.
  - When an IRB application is necessary, the APE faculty advisor serves as the principal investigator and is responsible for assisting the student in developing a protocol and meeting IRB submission requirements.

During the APE process, the APE faculty advisor serves as a resource for both the student and the preceptor.
- The APE faculty advisor helps track the student's progress and consults with the preceptor when necessary.
- The APE faculty advisor reviews the preceptor's evaluation and the final products in evaluating the student's APE.

### *APE Director's Role*

The APE director's office is the liaison for the student, the preceptor, and the APE faculty advisor. The primary role of the APE director is to:

- Make sure **students are aware of the requirements and expectations of the APE** by providing the mandatory APE orientation prior to the beginning of the APE semester, as well as meeting with students individually with questions, issues, or concerns relating to the APE.
- **Provide resources and leads for students to locate APE opportunities.**
- Work with the preceptor to ensure they are aware of rules and expectations regarding the APE by providing them with the preceptor guidebook.
- Be available for questions or concerns regarding the APE from the student, preceptor, and the APE advisor.
- Track and collect final copies of APE paperwork from all parties.
- Send out reminders to students, preceptors, and APE advisors regarding the APE paperwork and deadlines.
- Post APE grades once all paperwork has been received at the conclusion of the APE.

### *Handling Difficult Situations*

The APE surpasses strengthening knowledge alone; the APE should allow students to develop professionally and help to build a strong work ethic in the student. Part of the student's professional development may involve dealing with challenging situations. When difficulties arise between the student and the preceptor or others in the organization, the first step should be to address the issue with the parties involved and then try to resolve the issue. Often what seem like unsolvable problems are not hard to address with a few slight adjustments.

If the problem persists or cannot be resolved by talking with the preceptor, the student should contact the APE director or their APE faculty advisor at any time for assistance. The APE director may intervene in situations that seem difficult and offer mediation between the student and the preceptor and/or the organization.

Students are at their APE sites at the invitation of the organization and the preceptor. Both parties reserve the right to terminate the Applied Practice Experience at any time. Of course, if after working with the APE director, the situation remains untenable; the student may leave the APE. This is a last resort and still requires follow-up with the preceptor in order to leave on a good note. Sometimes lack of awareness can lead to unmet expectations.

# Forms and Final Products

*Learning Agreement*

The effectiveness of the Applied Practice Experience is greatly enhanced when the student, preceptor, and advisor seek to clearly define the learning objectives, competencies, and final products for the Applied Practice Experience. The student has the responsibility to ensure all information is complete on the learning agreement. If the learning agreement is not completed thoroughly, the learning agreement will be returned to the student and the Applied Practice Experience start date may be delayed.

Students should communicate with the preceptor and the Applied Practice Experience advisor via email, a conference call, or in a meeting to complete the learning agreement. Once determined, the learning agreement must be signed by all parties including APE faculty advisor, preceptor, and student. **A copy of the agreement should be retained by all parties** for future reference and monitoring.

Instructions on the Learning Agreement form detail how to write the APE Proposal that will be submitted with the Learning Agreement prior to registration for the APE. The proposal includes a summary of the APE organization, objectives, activities, and competencies to be attained during the APE. An APE must include at least 5 competencies from the list of 22 foundational MPH competencies. Students may select additional competencies from the list of 22 foundational competencies or 5 TTUHSC program specific competencies. A clear proposal should ideally list the competencies to be attained with description of expected activities that student will carry out to fulfill each competency.

The original, signed, learning agreement will be kept in the APE Director's office. The learning agreement acts as a contract, protecting the student and building on concepts set forth in the original position description. A student may not start the Applied Practice Experience until the completed and signed learning agreement is submitted and approved by the APE Director.

## Evaluations

There are four evaluations required to be completed and submitted at the conclusion of the APE. All evaluations must be completed for the following (examples can be found on the Web site):

1.  **Midpoint Student Evaluation**
2.  **Final Student Evaluation**
3.  **Preceptor Evaluation**
4.  **APE Faculty Advisor Evaluation and Products & Competencies report**

Students should request an evaluation from their preceptor and faculty advisor only after all APE activities are completed and all final products have been submitted to the preceptor and faculty advisor.

## One Page Summary/Abstract

All students are required to complete and submit for online publication on the DPH Web site, a written article describing their APE project. Students should discuss the expectations of the article with their APE advisor. Students should summarize the project, including aims and outcomes. Pictures, tables, and/or figures are strongly encouraged and should be integrated into the summary so that it can be published as a single page PDF on the Web site.

## Presentation

All students are required to complete a presentation (poster or oral) during any Public Health meeting or conference, to a class, to the department, or during the annual Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Student Research Week. Presentation to community stakeholders may also fulfill this requirement. Presentations to the Department of Public Health should be scheduled in advance, and should include about a 20-25 minute presentation with a short question and answer session to follow. The presentation should include an introduction to the organization the student worked with, the aims or objectives of the APE, the competencies selected to be fulfilled during the APE, and a discussion of outcomes or materials produced for the APE.

## Activity Log

CEPH guidelines no longer require a minimum number of hours for the APE. Rather, the APE is project based, meaning that students propose a reasonable set of objectives and end products that will be completed in the course of the APE. When the student believes that these products are finished and objectives have been met, he or she should consult with the preceptor and faculty advisor to ensure that all parties are in agreement that the APE is finished. The previous minimum of 180 hours is a good guidepost in regard to the scope of a project, once one considers planning meetings, site hours, writing and project development, and presentation(s). Students are advised to keep track of their general timeline of activities, but the department no longer requires a formal hour log to be submitted.

## Grading
The APE is graded Pass/Fail based on the preceptor, student, and faculty advisor evaluations, the submission of all materials relating to the APE products by the appropriate deadline. The APE director submits the course grade upon receipt of all materials and evaluations from the student and other parties. Student must complete a one page project summary (pictures, table, or figures are encouraged), which will be published on the TTUHSC MPH Web site.

Student may receive a grade of *PR* if all work is not completed within a single semester. The APE Director will grant the *PR* as long as the student is making reasonable progress on the APE. The preceptor and faculty advisor must agree that the student should continue APE work beyond the current semester. Failure to complete the APE within a year from date of registration in the course will result in a grade of "F" for the APE. Once all materials are submitted and requirements are met by the deadline, the grade of *PR* will be replaced with a Pass/Fail grade as determined by the APE Director.

## Two (or more) Products

As detailed above, each APE requires a minimum of two products. These products may vary in nature, and should be clearly defined at the beginning of the APE and agreed upon by the student, preceptor, and faculty advisor. At the completion of the APE, students should submit all products relevant to the project to the APE Director. These may include reports, spreadsheets, informational materials, presentation slides, or other digital artifacts.

# *Appendix A*

**Department of Public Health Contact Information**

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# *Appendix B*

**MPH Competencies**

All MPH graduates must demonstrate the following competencies. The school or program documents at least one specific, required assessment activity (eg, component of existing course, paper, presentation, test) for each competency below, during which faculty or other qualified individuals (eg, preceptors) validate the student's ability to perform the competency.

Assessment opportunities may occur in foundational courses that are common to all students, in courses that are required for a concentration or in other educational requirements outside of designated coursework, but the school or program must assess all MPH students, at least once, on each competency. Assessment may occur in simulations, group projects, presentations, written products, etc. This requirement also applies to students completing an MPH in combination with another degree (eg, joint, dual, concurrent degrees). For combined degree students, assessment may take place in either degree program.

These competencies are informed by the traditional public health core knowledge areas, (biostatistics, epidemiology, social and behavioral sciences, health services administration and environmental health sciences), as well as cross-cutting and emerging public health areas.

| **MPH Foundational Competencies** |
|---|
| *Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health* |
| 1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice |
| 2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context |
| 3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate |
| 4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice |
| *Public Health and Health Care Systems* |
| 5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care and public health systems across national and international settings |
| 6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels |
| *Planning and Management to Promote Health* |
| 7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health. |
| 8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health programs |
| 9. Design a population-based project, program or intervention |
| 10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management |
| 11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs and policies |

| | |
|---|---|
| ***Policy in Public Health*** | |
| 12. | Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence |
| 13. | Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes |
| 14. | Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations |
| 15. | Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity |
| ***Leadership*** | |
| 16. | Apply principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making |
| 17. | Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges |
| ***Communication*** | |
| 18. | Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors |
| 19. | Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation |
| 20. | Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content |
| ***Inter-professional Practice*** | |
| 21. | Perform effectively on inter-professional teams |
| ***Systems Thinking*** | |
| 22. | Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue |
| ***TTUHSC MPH Program*** | |
| 23. | Characterize the unique challenges of the public health frontier including issues of diversity, scarcity, adversity, and need |
| 24. | Use innovation problem-solving to impact the public health frontier |
| 25. | Apply ethical principles to public health program planning, implementation and evaluation |
| 26. | Demonstrates approaches for assessing, preventing and controlling environmental and occupational health hazards that pose risks to human health and safety |
| 27. | Uses theory-informed models for rural community engagement |

# *Appendix C*

## Guide to Writing Quality Learning Objectives

The learning objectives are statements describing the work that will be performed and what the student expects to gain from the experience. They are written with guidance from the preceptor and the APE faculty advisor. Throughout the APE, the learning objectives will guide the student's progress and allow the preceptor and APE faculty advisor to evaluate the student's performance.

Each objective should be a brief, clear statement that explains the tasks that will be performed and what the student will be evaluated on. Objectives should be SMART:

- SPECIFIC – Include details that define the goal
- MEASURABLE – An objective that can be quantified and can easily be evaluated
- ACCEPTABLE – all parties (preceptor, advisor and student) should agree on what will be accomplished at the APE site.
- REALISTIC – each objective must be practical and attainable
- TIME-BOUND – some objectives will have to be completed before others, and all need to be completed by the end of the APE

*Sample Statements*

- *Develop a survey for the pregnant teens and administer the survey to 200 teens in rural communities statewide during 10 weeks.*
- *Analyze data using SPSS on the level of anaerobic bacteria in wastewater treatment systems by (date).*
- *Gain experience in collecting data on the incidence of leukemia in 50 Native American children during the first ten weeks of the Applied Practice Experience.*

*Work plan and Timelines*
> There are examples of a work plan and timeline template that are useful in developing the Learning Agreement available on the Applied Practice Experience Web site.

## Writing a Final Report

Students often complete a final written report as one of their two products, although different APEs may dictate different final products. The below information is from a previous version of the handbook, but is being retained in the Appendix for student reference.

The final report should summarize the student's APE with details of specific experiences and how the APE is important to the field of public health. Students should follow the guidelines below in structuring their report. The student should discuss the expectations of their report carefully with their APE faculty advisor. The report length should be sufficient to cover the expected content carefully. Be sure to include appropriate references and appendices.

INTRODUCTION

- Describe the nature of your Applied Practice Experience (e.g., whether it is a descriptive project, experimental project, research project, or survey).

- Very briefly, describe the site and organizational unit where the APE took place, its primary mission, and its relationship to the overall organizational structure of the agency. Describe services provided, programs and public health objectives, and specific population groups targeted.
- Describe the duties specifically related to the APE in the context of the entire organization.

## PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- State the purpose of the APE (e.g., proving a hypothesis, analyzing a problem, completing an evaluation, etc.). What was the significance of the issue worked on? Why did this need to be addressed?
- Discuss the objectives and activities completed to meet each one.
- Outline the problem and the methods used to define and address the problem.

## RESULTS

- Describe the outcomes and products of the APE
- Discuss how the activities of the APE led to the fulfillment of the selected competencies
- What were the most important or surprising findings?
- How does this work impact the future of this public health issue?
- Summarize recommendations

## EVALUATION & CONCLUSION

- Provide a careful evaluation of your APE.
- Was it a valuable learning experience? Why or why not?
- How did it compare with your expectations?
- What types of classroom skills were you able to employ in the field?
- What did the experience teach you about the world of public health practice?

In addition to the final report, include relevant materials developed during the APE, (e.g., draft or final reports, surveys, questionnaires, etc.) as appendices. If you worked primarily on a research project, a literature review relevant to the topic should be included.

Your title page should consist of your name, division, cohort year (year you entered the College), project title (as stated in your learning agreement), preceptor's name and organization, advisor's name and date of submission.

## APPENDICES

- Instruments developed and utilized during the APE (such as surveys, focus group questions, etc.)
- Graphs or data analysis results
- Pictures
- Organization description
- Other supplemental information referred to in the final report

For advice on fulfilling the above requirements, students should consult with their APE faculty advisor.

## *Appendix D*

## Frequently asked questions

**Q: Who is my APE faculty advisor?**

**A:** The faculty advisor for your APE should be selected by the student. The faculty advisor may be a member of the department of public health primary or secondary faculty. Ideally, the faculty advisor should be a person who is best qualified to advise a project on the topic you are working on.

**Q: Are my MPH academic advisor and my APE faculty advisor the same person?**

**A:** Students are assigned an academic advisor before starting the program. This person helps students register for classes, update the degree plan, and set a graduation timeline. Alternatively, the APE faculty advisor is selected by the student based on area of expertise relating to the APE. Your academic advisor may also be your APE advisor, but there is no requirement that they be the same.

**Q: Can I complete the APE and the ILE in the same semester?**

**A:** Yes, these may be done concurrently, but please be aware of the time demands of completing both in the same semester. The main cautionary note, however, is if the start of your ILE is for some reason dependent on the completion of your APE, be mindful of the fact that your ILE could be indefinitely delayed if the APE is delayed for unforeseen reasons.

**Q: Can my APE and ILE cover the same topic?**

**A:** Yes, the APE and ILE can cover the same topic, particularly if the student chooses a project or thesis for the ILE. However, the APE and ILE should produce distinctly different products, and each should have its own set of clearly defined aims and goals. The faculty member(s) involved with an APE and ILE that cover the same topic should ensure that the objectives and goals for each are distinct and clearly delineated.

**Q: Can I do an APE at my current place of work?**

**A:** Yes, the APE can be completed at your place of work, although the project should be clearly defined as something outside of your normal job duties. That is, one should not select an APE with objectives that merely require carrying out one's typical daily job duties. Students in this position should be cognizant of the fact that carrying out an APE at his/her place of work will require a preceptor, who may or may not already be that person's superior. An APE that meets this criterion should clearly lay out how

**Q: Is the APE a research project?**

**A:** No, the APE is not intended to be a research project. Certain APEs may require the implementation of different types of research or assessment tools, but the ultimate aim of the project is to produce a set of products toward the goal of community engagement. Although it is feasible to publish some component of an APE in an academic journal, this is not the ultimate aim of the project.

**Q: Can a faculty member be my preceptor?**

**A:** No, the preceptor should be someone who is not a member of the primary or secondary faculty of the Department of Public Health.

**Q: Does my preceptor need to hold an MPH degree?**

**A:** No, the preceptor should be someone actively involved in some type of public health practice in the community, whose experience in their position provides a resource beyond the expertise found on the Public Health faculty.

**Q: How do I find an APE site?**

**A:** This process can start many places. Students may have a clear idea of the organization and preceptor they want to work with, including existing contacts that facilitate this process. In this case, the student should consult with their desired faculty advisor or the APE director to begin the process of developing a formal agreement.

Students who do not have an idea of their APE topic should arrange to meet with a potential faculty advisor and/or the APE Director. This meeting should explore the student's interests and goals for the APE, and the faculty member can begin to suggest potential contacts for the student to talk with to explore potential preceptors and sites. Students should talk to potential preceptors about the needs of their organization before finalizing an APE project, as the intent of the experience is for students to develop a practice project that addresses the needs of the community in some form. The exploratory process can be time consuming, especially when a site or APE topic does not become immediately clear. Students should plan their APE planning accordingly based on their goals for completion of the APE.

Potential APE projects may occasionally be advertised to students during classes or over the student email listserv, but these opportunities are distributed on a case by case basis, and a student should not wait for these announcements to start searching for an APE site.

**Q: Can I start the APE before the semester in which I plan to enroll in it?**

**A:** Students may begin the APE as soon as the APE Director receives the completed Learning Agreement, signed by all relevant parties, and once the community organization has formally agreed to the Affiliation Agreement (this is handled largely by the APE Director). As such, yes, a student may start the APE before he or she is technically enrolled in GSPH 5319, but not before the aforementioned paperwork is completed and submitted.

**Q: Can an APE be done as a group project?**

**A:** Yes, two or more students may propose a group APE. The details on workload and expectations should be clarified with the faculty advisor and preceptor. The end products may include joint projects, but the faculty and preceptor must assess individual student attainment of competencies on final evaluations.

**Q: Can an APE be an extension of a class project?**

**A:** Yes, a student may take a course project and develop it to become an APE. Please be mindful of the fact that the APE should be clearly defined to extend beyond the coursework. That is, coursework cannot be "double counted" for both the course hours and as one's APE, but a separate, but related project may serve as an APE that is an extension of prior coursework.