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Welcome Message

Welcome to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Department of Public Health Master of Public Health (MPH) Applied Practice Experience Program (APE)!

The Applied Practice Experience (APE) is an essential and required component to the MPH program by allowing students the opportunity to engage in hands-on training with experts already in the field in community-based, non-profit, international or any number of public health settings. The MPH APE handbook serves as a resource for MPH students, preceptors, and APE advisors to aid in the expectations of the APE. This handbook describes policies and responsibilities pertaining to the TTUHSC GSBS Department of Public Health APE.

The student has the responsibility of selecting his/her APE site and preceptor, which will then be approved by the APE director and APE faculty advisor. This handbook lists requirements needed to complete the APE, including prerequisites, the APE process, as well as necessary documentation that must be submitted prior to, during and at the conclusion of the APE. If you have any questions or concerns, or need information, please feel free to contact the APE director, by referring to Contact Information in the Appendix.

Mission and Goals

The mission of the TTUHSC MPH program is to improve community health status by training diverse public health professionals to promote health, reduce disparities, and prevent disease using innovative multidisciplinary teaching, research, and practice approaches. The program’s goals, addressing instruction, research and service are as follows.

Instruction Overarching Statement: To deliver core public health competencies through public health faculty, professionals, and practitioners to motivate the student body and incorporate feedback into a continuous evaluation of the program.

- Goal 1.1: Provide high quality, competency-based public health instruction.
- Goal 1.2: Increase student enrollment to meet needs in West Texas and nationally for public health professionals.
- Goal 1.3: Provide training opportunities for students to meet competencies as the basis for employment in public health.

Research Overarching Statement: To provide leadership to the public health communities through active service on boards and committees, provide public health content expertise to the larger community of health care, and serve as mentors and examples to public health students in community service.

- Goal 2.1: Advance public health practice by engaging students in service learning.
- Goal 2.2: Faculty exemplifies a commitment to service through the promotion of healthy communities locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

Service Overarching Statement: To foster excellence in research in public health and related disciplines of inquiry and scholarship.

- Goal 3.1: Expand the development of new scientific knowledge in public health.
- Goal 3.2: Expand the dissemination of new scientific knowledge in public health.
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 Applied Practice Experience. The APE is an integral component of professional training in public health, enabling students to observe and learn from professionals in the field. The APE allows students a significant opportunity to apply theoretical learning toward the achievement of practical goals and skills while under the supervision of a preceptor and APE faculty advisor.

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 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.

Experience demonstrates that one of the best ways to accomplish the APE objectives is for the preceptor and the student, with faculty consultation, to define tasks and projects of importance for the organization and of interest to the student. This will assist the student in developing new skills and in gaining technical and managerial competence in selected areas.

Prerequisites
- Students may begin the APE after completing the required core courses (Introduction to Biostatistics, Introduction to Epidemiology, Introduction to Environmental Health, Introduction to Health Policy and Management, Introduction to Social and Behavioral Health and Research Methods)
- Be in good academic standing, with a minimum 3.0 overall GPA
- Have an APE site and project approved by the APE faculty advisor prior to registration and the APE start date.
- Students must be eligible to register for the APE the semester they begin the APE.

The student schedules the APE when best suited to meet his/her needs as well as the needs of the participating organization. Students must plan ahead financially for the APE and consider that they may or 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 in the same manner as other courses.

APE Course Requirements
APE course requirements:
- 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 (if applicable).
- APE faculty advisor approval of the APE Learning Agreement. The Applied Practice Experience Learning Agreement should include at least 5 competencies, of which at least three must be foundational that will be accomplished during the APE.
• Submission of the signed *Applied Practice Experience Proposal* form to the Applied Practice Experience director prior to start of APE.
• Submission of an approved APE *Learning Agreement* to the APE director.
• Registration for GSPH 5319.
• Passing evaluations from the APE preceptor and APE advisor.
• Submission of all evaluations, E-zine article, assessments or written report and abstract from presentation (poster or oral) from any formal venue or class, including Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Student Research Week to APE director.

**Registration and Grading**
Students must be registered for the APE course GSPH 5319 prior to beginning the APE. Students must plan ahead to ensure they have planned financially to register for the APE course just as they would for any course. Students cannot register for the course on their own. The APE Learning Agreement with written attachment, APE Affiliation Agreement (if applicable) and APE Proposal form must all be submitted to the APE director’s office prior to registration approval. Once approved, the APE director’s office will submit documentation to the GSBS office to request registration of the student for GSPH 5319.

The APE is graded Pass/Fail based upon the preceptor and faculty advisor evaluations, the APE report, and the submission of all APE materials by the appropriate deadline. The APE director submits documentation to have the grade posted once the grade is determined by the APE faculty advisor upon receipt of all final materials from the student. Student must complete APE reports in the form of an e-zine article, which will be published by the APE office to the MPH program website.

Student may receive a grade of *PR* if all work is not completed within a single semester. The department chair will grant the *PR* based upon fulfillments met by student at time of request. The preceptor of the APE site must be in agreement with the student continuing 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 graduate advisor.
The APE Process

Planning and Preparing for the APE (Example)
Most full-time students will complete the APE during the summer after their first two semesters. Preparing for the APE begins early in the curriculum. 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 APE orientation must contact the APE director.

The APE Handbook and the website http://www.ttuhsc.edu/graduate-school-of-biomedical-sciences/public-health/default.aspx provide critical information regarding the APE. The website 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.

Choosing an APE
Arranging an APE represents a mix of student, faculty, and staff-initiated activities. The student has the ultimate responsibility, with guidance from faculty and staff, to secure an APE and to utilize the resources available to them. Students can initiate their APE search in a number of ways, including the Department of Public Health APE website “Applied Practice Experience Opportunities” page, personal and/or professional contacts, faculty recommendations, or through the West Texas Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program staff. Student-identified sites must be approved by the APE graduate faculty member prior to the start of the APE.

Opportunities may include the following:

- An APE or internship completed during a summer or academic term
- Course-based activities (eg, 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
- Activities linked to service learning, as defined by the program, school or university
- Co-curricular activities (eg, service and volunteer opportunities, such as those organized by a student association)
- A blend of for-credit and/or not-for-credit activities

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.

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

The APE allow each student to demonstrate attainment of at least five foundational competencies (Appendices ii). The five foundational 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 foundational competencies. The applied experiences may also address additional foundational or concentration-specific competencies, in addition to the five foundational competencies.
APE Faculty Advisor
Faculty connections with the community may lead to potential APE opportunities for students. Students should establish a relationship with their APE faculty advisor to discuss their career goals. As opportunities arise, faculty may be more willing to recommend students and connect them with a preceptor if they are aware of the career goals and interests of the student.

Students
In addition, there is a list of current APE locations on the APE web site. The student must contact the organization to make sure the opportunity is currently available. The student must also make sure the organization has a preceptor who is willing and able to devote sufficient time to his/her APE.

Being involved 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) may also lead to an APE opportunity.

Research National Organizations
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) website, www.aspph.org, provides links to several national opportunities.

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 expects the student to complete the Applied Practice Experience on site providing work space, access to resources, and 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.

Timeline (Before, during, and after the APE)

Semester Prior to the APE (or before)

- Student explores APE opportunities and secures an APE with faculty and staff guidance.
- Student meets with his/her APE faculty advisor to discuss the opportunity and gain approval. Your APE faculty advisor is different from your academic faculty advisor and is selected specifically for your APE opportunity.
• Student obtains and completes the Affiliation Agreement. The Affiliation Agreement is the document of agreement between TTUHSC and the host organization providing the opportunity for students to utilize programs and services for educational or clinical experience in the student education process.
• Completion of IRB (Institutional Review Board) or QI (Quality Improvement) submission (as appropriate) and obtain approval prior to beginning the APE.
• Student completes the Learning Agreement to include the MPH competencies, objectives, and activities to be addressed during the APE.

During the APE

• After the Learning Agreement has been completed, approved and signed by all parties, the student submits the Learning Agreement to the APE director. The APE director will then submit a request to have the student enrolled into GSPH 5319 to the GSBS office. Students are not permitted to add the APE course to their schedule; the APE course must be added by the unit coordinator in the GSBS office at the request of the APE director.
• If students choose to collaborate on the APE, all documentation must be submitted separately. This includes, but is not limited to, all agreements and other necessary pre-APE forms to the APE director’s office, evaluation forms, articles, presentations, assessments, and/or reports. All collaborative projects will be graded individually.
• Midway through the APE, students are required to meet with their preceptor to complete the Midpoint Evaluation form (found at: http://www.ttuhsc.edu/graduate-school-of-biomedical-sciences/public-health/default.aspx). This evaluation form is to be completed by the student with the preceptor and offers a time for reflection, self-assessment, and revision.
• If there are any changes made to the APE, a Notice of Applied Practice Experience Change form will need to be completed. This form can be found at: http://www.ttuhsc.edu/graduate-school-of-biomedical-sciences/public-health/default.aspx.

The APE site or the preceptor may encourage students to present to key people at the organization about the APE and activities or projects they participated in. This is a great opportunity for students to showcase what they have learned on-site and how they connected the APE to their course knowledge. Students may want to consider inviting their APE faculty advisor, APE director, other MPH faculty, staff, students, and the GSBS unit coordinator to the presentation.

Nearing the End of the APE

As the end of the Applied Practice Experience APE approaches, students must make sure all APE requirements are on track for completion. Students need to review their objectives and goals as stated in the learning agreement. A week or two before completion, the student distributes the evaluations to his/her preceptor and APE faculty advisor. These evaluations must be emailed to the APE director within 5 working days of completion of the APE. The GSBS unit coordinator will then post the preceptor evaluation for the APE faculty advisor to review. A copy of each evaluation can be found at: http://www.ttuhsc.edu/graduate-school-of-biomedical-sciences/public-health/default.aspx.

After completion of the APE, students should send a thank you letter to the preceptor to express their appreciation for the time and commitment involved, the wisdom shared, and the growth they have gained. This will pay off later when they are ready to begin their career search because they will have developed a valuable mentor in the field of public health.
The student is responsible for confirming the submission and receipt of all completed forms. Once all forms, evaluations, and the written report are all on file in the APE director’s office, the APE director posts the grade as given by the APE faculty advisor.

**APE Roles and Responsibilities**

**Role of the APE Director’s Office**

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.**

**Role of the APE Faculty Advisor**

Each student participating in an APE must have an APE faculty advisor who is a faculty member of the Department of Public Health. The student’s APE faculty advisor should not be confused with the student’s faculty advisor. The student’s APE faculty advisor could be the same faculty member as the student’s faculty advisor but this is not always the case. The student has the responsibility to identify and as a faculty member to serve as his/her APE faculty advisor. The student should select a faculty member that has similar interests and experience. 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. The APE faculty advisor is responsible for deciding, along with the student, if an IRB or QI 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 website and click on the APE Process and Forms link: [http://www.ttuhsc.edu/graduate-school-of-biomedical-sciences/public-health/default.aspx](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 the 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 is the main contact and principal investigator with IRB/QI if needed. The APE faculty advisor reviews the preceptor’s evaluation and the final report in evaluating the students APE overall.
**Role of the Preceptor**

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. In addition, 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.

**Role of the Student**

During the APE, the preceptor is responsible for the student while at the organization. The APE advisor offers guidance and assistance as requested by the student and preceptor. The student should expect to function as a professional. 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.

Students should use the initial days to get to know their preceptor and what he/she expects from them. 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 while at the APE 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 with 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.
- Complete a daily activities log.
- Produce a quality product useful to the organization.
- 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 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 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. In short, students should feel free to disclose APE concerns to those whom they feel most comfortable, as long as the student conducts him or herself in a professional manner.

**The Learning Agreement**

**Completing the 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 which is on the website (see below) must be signed by all parties including Applied Practice Experience advisor, preceptor, and student. **A copy of the agreement should be retained by all parties** for future reference and monitoring.

Learning agreement located at:
http://www.ttuhsc.edu/graduate-school-of-biomedical-sciences/public-health/default.aspx

The original, signed learning agreement will be kept in the Applied Practice Experience director’s office. The learning agreement acts as a contract, protecting the student and building on concepts set forth in the original position description. If a student fails to complete the learning agreement prior to beginning the Applied Practice Experience, the hours spent at the Applied Practice Experience site will **not** count toward the Applied Practice Experience.

**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 Applied Practice Experience advisor. Throughout the Applied Practice Experience, the learning objectives will guide the student’s progress and allow the preceptor and Applied Practice Experience 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 can easily be evaluated
- **ACCEPTABLE** – all parties (preceptor, advisor and student) should agree on what will be accomplished in the 120 hours on site. By being involved in designing objectives, students take ownership of the work
- **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 Applied Practice Experience

**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 website.

**Evaluations**

There are four evaluations required to be completed and submitted at the conclusion of the Applied Practice Experience. All evaluations must be completed for the following (examples can be found on the website):

1. **Midpoint Student Evaluation**
2. **Final Student Evaluation**
3. **Preceptor Evaluation**
4. **APE Advisor Evaluation**

**E-Zine Article**

All students are required to complete and submit for online publication a written article describing their APE project. Students should discuss the expectations of the article with their APE advisor. Students can utilize the outline of the final report to summarize the APE and include the following: Introduction, Project Goals and Objectives, Results, and Evaluation. Examples are on the APE website.

**Presentation**

All students are required to complete a presentation, poster or oral, during any Public Health meeting or conference, a class, or during the annual Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Student Research Week.

**Activity Log**

All students are required to complete and submit an activity log along with the final evaluation forms. The activity log documents dates, hours (180-240 hours), setting, persons, and subjects used to meet the
requirements for the Applied Practice Experience which were originally noted on the Learning Agreement. The student and the preceptor must sign the activity log verifying hours have been completed prior to submission of the activity log to the Applied Practice Experience director’s office.

**Final Report**

All students are required to complete a final written report that will focus on sharing information on the APE. 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 the Applied Practice Experience (e.g., whether it is a descriptive project, experimental project, research project, or survey).
- Very briefly, describe the organizational unit where the Applied Practice Experience 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 Applied Practice Experience in the context of the entire organization.

**PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- State the purpose of the Applied Practice Experience (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 were activities completed to meet each one.
- Outline the problem and the methods used to define and address the problem.

**RESULTS**

- Describe the outcome or product of the Applied Practice Experience
- 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 the 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 Applied Practice Experience, (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 i

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Appendix ii

MPH Competencies

All MPH graduates demonstrate the following competencies. The school or program documents at least one specific, required assessment activity (e.g., component of existing course, paper, presentation, test) for each competency below, during which faculty or other qualified individuals (e.g., 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 (e.g., 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.

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 & Health Care Systems

5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory 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 & 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 policies or programs
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs
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

Interprofessional Practice
21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams

Systems Thinking
22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

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1 "Interprofessional education occurs when students from two or more professions learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes.” From: Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education & Collaborative Practice (WHO/HRH/HPN/10.3).

In this context, “interprofessional” refers to engagement with professionals outside of public health (eg, architects, nurses), rather than to engagement with individuals from other public health disciplines (eg, biostatisticians, health promotion specialists).