



MASSACHUSETTS
COLLEGE of PHARMACY
and HEALTH SCIENCES

Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

School of Arts & Sciences

Master of Public Health (MPH) Program

PBH890 Public Health Practice Experience

Preceptor Guide



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Contact Information	3
MPH Overview	3
Competencies Expected of MPH Students	4
Foundational Competencies:	4
Community Health Competencies:	5
Public Health Practice Experience Overview	6
Public Health Practice Experience Objectives	6
Preceptor Definition and Qualifications	6
Preceptor Responsibilities	7
Student Responsibilities	8
Master of Public Health Program and Faculty Responsibilities	8
Institutional Review Board	8
Tips for a Successful Practice Experience	9
Appendix A: Internship Agreement	
Appendix B: Portfolio Guidance	
Appendix C: Course Syllabus	



Introduction

The development of a competent future public health workforce is strongly influenced by the public health students' educational experiences. The responsibility for providing realistic, high quality public health education is shared by both the MCPHS University and the practitioners out in the field who precept our students during PBH890, Public Health Practice Experience.

Every year, approximately 125 students in the Master of Public Health (MPH) Program at MCPHS serve as interns in public health agencies and related organizations. Internships provide opportunities to apply skills and knowledge learned in the classroom to the real world of public health. These applied experiences, in turn, strengthen our students' competence in the key activities of our field.

This *Preceptor Guide* is an effort to address potential questions students and preceptors may have about the Public Health Practice Experience course. We anticipate that more issues will emerge in the future. As they do, the guide will be updated. The guide starts with some background information on the MPH Program, with special emphasis on development of professional competencies, a hallmark of our program.

The next section, *Preceptor Definition and Qualifications*, begins on page 6. This section addresses many of the specific issues and questions that our preceptors have posed to us during the past three years. The final sections provide information that is likely to be helpful to all preceptors: tips for a successful practice experience, the form that must be completed, and the course syllabus.

We hope this guide is helpful to you. If you have suggestions or questions, please feel free to contact us.

Contact Information

Carly Levy, DHS, MPH, CPH
MPH Program Director/Practice Experience Faculty Advisor
Carly.levy@mcphs.edu
617-735-1014

MPH Overview

The standard MPH program is a two-year, 42-credit program. The program is offered both online and face-to-face on our Boston campus. Students complete six core courses: Survey of Public Health, Methods in Biostatistics and Epidemiology, Environmental Health, Health Policy and Management, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Qualitative Research Methods. The current concentration is Community Health and students take the following courses:

- Community Health Science and Practice
- Health Promotion and Education
- Community Health Assessments
- Program Design, Research and Evaluation
- **Public Health Practice Experience**



- Preparatory Seminar, Culminating Experience
- Culminating Experience

Students are required to select two electives. The Public Health Practice Experience provides the opportunity for students to apply what they have learned in the didactic portion of the degree.

Competencies Expected of MPH Students

All students in the MPH Program are expected to master a set of public health competencies during the course of their studies. There are 22 foundational competencies for the MPH and 5 competencies for the Community Health Concentration.

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 & 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, implementation, or critique 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 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 leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue
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 (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) 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. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health

Systems Thinking

22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative

Community Health Competencies:

1. Apply theories, concepts, models, and frameworks of health education, health promotion, and health literacy to address a public health problem, considering the cultural values, beliefs, and traditions of a community
2. Demonstrate risk assessment and risk communication approaches in managing occupational and environmental exposures



3. Assess human and ecological effects of environmental agents and climate change, based on: (1) factors in the physical environment, (2) factors in the social environment, and (3) issues of environmental justice and equity
4. Use the principles of community-based participatory research to develop a strategy to learn about community-identified issues, build equitable partnerships, and formalize a process to apply research to both practice and policy
5. Prepare a funding proposal that demonstrates knowledge of funding sources, measurable goals and objectives, and budgets

Public Health Practice Experience Overview

Provides field experience for all MPH candidates. Students will select a public health agency, healthcare facility, non-profit organization, or other health-related site. Students must submit a proposal to their faculty advisor before registering. Students will also be evaluated by an on-site supervisor. A minimum of 120 clock hours is required. Prerequisites: PBH701, PBH750; credit, 2 s.h.

Public Health Practice Experience Objectives

1. Develop an evidence-based project plan and learning objectives for the Practice Experience;
2. Analyze individual, organizational, and community concerns, deficits, assets, and resources;
3. Design implementation and evaluation plans for a specific public health project;
4. Assess personal public health knowledge and skills and identify strengths and areas for growth;
5. Embody professionalism and a spirit of collaboration with diverse communities and constituencies;
6. Demonstrate team-building, negotiation, and conflict management skills;
7. Summarize data relevant to the public health issue addressed in the Practice Experience;
8. Design an effective and visually interesting poster to present results from the Practice Experience; and
9. Present a professional portfolio to an audience of peers and faculty.

Preceptor Definition and Qualifications

“A preceptor is a person who teaches, counsels, inspires, serves as a role model and supports the growth and development of an individual (the novice) for a fixed and limited amount of time with the specific purpose of socializing the novice into a new role” (Morrow, 1984).

Qualifications

- Willingness to share professional values, beliefs, and skills with the student
- A passion for public health and a desire to share the practice with others



- A strong knowledge of public health
- Effective verbal and written communication skills, including the ability to listen and ask questions
- Well organized and dependable
- Strong problem solving skills

Preceptor Responsibilities

Prior to placement, the preceptor should:

- Identify a project or set of projects for a student to complete.
- Discuss competencies that the student will work to develop during the course of the internship.
- Review the student's *Internship Agreement* to be sure you and the student agree on the projects and work assignments to be completed.
- If you are in agreement, sign the form so the student can begin the course. The form will also be signed by the MPH Faculty Advisor and the Provost.

Once the placement has been made, the preceptor should:

- Arrange a schedule with the student for completing the necessary hours.
- Give the student an orientation to the site early in the field experience. This will assist in a smooth transition into the site and optimize the use of available resources.
- Provide adequate office space and office materials for the student if necessary.
- Explain to the student your expectations of his or her conduct. The areas of dress, conduct, scheduling of hours, and general characteristics of the Practicum/Internship should be discussed.
- Allow sufficient time for supervision and instruction in the form of routine interactions.
- Guide the student in his or her next steps throughout the project as needed and ask to review work periodically.
- Provide the student with constructive feedback.
- Afford the student the time and patience needed for an optimal learning experience.
- Keep a record of the student's progress, hours at the site, and copies of his or her work.
- The preceptor should provide constructive feedback privately to the student.
 - Feedback should be specific and timely, based on observation of behavior and skills.
 - Feedback should include descriptions of specific behaviors with both positive and negative statements.
 - In the event that the preceptor and student cannot resolve an issue, the MPH Faculty Advisor should be contacted.
- **Complete the final evaluation of the student.**



Student Responsibilities

The student is responsible for choosing a special project/internship/practicum of interest and for contacting the potential agency/preceptor. Once a project has been selected, the student is expected to:

- Function as a professional: This should be reflected in projects and activities performed by the student as well as relationships with the preceptor, other agency staff, etc.
- Be professional in appearance, both in dress and conduct.
- Adhere to the schedule predetermined with the preceptor.
- Notify the preceptor if there is a possibility of being late or absent.
- Practice professional courtesy when communicating with clients and other health professionals.
- Clearly identify him or herself as a student when interacting with the public or with other health professionals.
- Report directly to the preceptor: The relationship between the student and the preceptor should be one of student-teacher rather than employer-employee, or co-workers. The student-teacher relationship should be built on mutual respect, trust, communication, and understanding.
- Complete a mid-point and final evaluation of the practice experience.
- Communicate concerns and problems to the preceptor and the MPH Faculty Advisor.
- Fulfill the learning goals, course objectives, and assignments.
- Follow agency policies and procedures (including policies on confidentiality, documentation, dress code, etc.).
- Develop a portfolio of work done at the site.

Master of Public Health Program and Faculty Responsibilities

- Assist the student in clarifying educational goals and competencies to be strengthened by the placement.
- Assist the student in selecting potential sites for the field experience.
- Guide students through the IRB process via presentations and individual assistance.
- Respond to the needs of the student and preceptor during the internship and provide consultation to students and preceptors upon request.
- Review and critique student posters prior to presentation.
- Maintain regular communication with students during the course of the internship.

Institutional Review Board

Institution Review Boards exist to protect human subjects from physical, emotional, and economic harm; assess research risk as regards to benefit to the subject and research methodology; and assure University compliance with federal regulations. IRB review may be necessary on human subjects research conducted by MCPHS faculty, staff and students.



Research: "A systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge"

Examples of Research

- Obtaining data from medical records
- Comparing two FDA approved drugs in an organized manner
- Running an investigational test for another site
- Doing statistical analysis for other sites

“Human” subject: A living individual about whom an investigator obtains either data through intervention or interaction with the individual; or identifiable private information.

“Protected Health Information”:

Protected Health Information (PHI) is subject to federal privacy regulations. PHI is defined as health information about a patient that relates to the patient’s past, present, or future physical or mental health, the provision of health care, or the payment for health care, and identifies the patient or could reasonably be expected to identify the patient. Some examples include: name, telephone numbers, medical record numbers, full face photographic images, and biometric identifiers.

Students are encouraged to work with their Faculty Advisor and a preceptor to determine if an IRB review is necessary. The MCPHS IRB Homepage is located at <https://my.mcphs.edu/departments/academic-affairs/institutional-review-board>

Tips for a Successful Practice Experience

1. **Focus on competencies to be strengthened during the internship** - One of the first tasks that preceptors carry out with students is the development of objectives that will assist the student to strengthen public health competencies, while meeting the organizational needs of the preceptor and agency.
2. **Be familiar with internship requirements** - The internship conducted by the student must meet the requirements outlined in the course syllabus.
3. **Arrange an orientation to the agency for the student** - Properly introducing the student to the agency or organization is crucial to the overall success of the internship and special project. Beginning with an orientation, the preceptor provides the environment in which the student can gain confidence in his or her ability to perform successfully as a public health practitioner.
4. **Find the right pace** - Frequently, the preceptor and the student are working together for the first time during the internship. A thoughtful assessment of the student’s abilities helps to avoid assigning too much responsibility too soon or withholding responsibilities that s/he may be able to complete.
5. **Schedule regular meetings** - Regular meetings in which the student updates the preceptor on progress and identifies any problems or issues are key to successful internships. Students are required to maintain a log of hours and internship assignments. This log can be signed weekly or monthly by the preceptor to assure that not only the



hour requirement for the internship/practicum is met but that the student is on track with previously established goals and objectives.

6. **Contact the MPH Program** - Communication is key! Questions will arise, many of which can be handled with a quick phone call or email. Don't hesitate to contact the MPH Faculty Advisor to discuss any issue that may arise.
7. **Collaborate on the Portfolio** - To the extent possible, preceptors are encouraged to review their students' portfolios and allow students to present their findings to members of the organization for discussion and feedback. These opportunities not only provide additional hands-on experiences and formal feedback to the agency, but they also help students prepare for the submission.

Student is responsible for (i) filling out this form completely, (ii) having it signed and dated by the Preceptor, and (iii) submitting the completed form to the MCPHS Faculty Advisor for approval and for signing on behalf of MCPHS.

INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") sets forth the understandings of the MCPHS University ("MCPHS") student intern identified below (the "Student Intern"), the preceptor identified below (the "Preceptor"), and MCPHS with respect to the student internship described below (the "Internship") in which the Student Intern will participate with the Preceptor as an integral part of the Student Intern's course of study in the MCPHS Master of Public Health program.

By signing this Agreement, the Preceptor, the Student Intern, and MCPHS hereby agree as follows:

1. PARTIES

(a) STUDENT:

Student's Name: _____ Student ID#: _____

Student's Previous Degree(s): _____

MCPHS Email: _____ Phone #: _____

Mailing Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

(b) PRECEPTOR:

Agency Name: _____

Agency website: _____ Agency Fax: _____

Preceptor's Name: _____ Credentials: _____

Preceptor's Title: _____

Preceptor's Email: _____ Preceptor's Phone: _____

Agency Address: _____
Street Apt/Suite/Office
City State/Country, if international Zip Code

(c) MCPHS FACULTY ADVISOR:

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

2. NOTICES

Notices with respect to this Agreement should be sent to:

MCPHS University
179 Longwood Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115
Attention: Provost

For administrative matters (such as scheduling, assignments, etc.) correspondence should be sent to:

MCPHS University
179 Longwood Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115
Attention: MPH Program Practice Coordinator

3. INTERNSHIP SCHEDULE

Begin Date: _____			Will You Have Any Planned Absences: Yes: ____ No: ____			
End Date: _____			If No, write N/A. If yes, please list planned absence dates:			

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	
Hours: _____						

4. INTERNSHIP GOALS/LEARNING OBJECTIVES (Attach additional sheet if necessary)

5. PLANNED EXPERIENCES/PROJECTS (Attach additional sheet if necessary)

6. STUDENT INTERN RESPONSIBILITIES. The Student Intern shall:

- (a) work on the days and at the times set forth above, which have been agreed upon with the Preceptor;
- (b) demonstrate professionalism in manner, dress and appearance;
- (c) maintain as confidential all patient, client, or other confidential records to which he or she may have access in connection with the Internship;
- (d) conform to any specific regulations/policies of the organization in which the Internship is taking place;
- (e) notify the Preceptor if the Student Intern will be absent from any scheduled participation in the Internship;
- (f) keep the required log (including activities and hours);
- (g) provide the MCPHS Faculty Advisor and the Preceptor with a written evaluation of the Intern's Internship experience after completion of the first 60 hours. Evaluation should include responses to the following questions:
 - (i) Do you need more assignments than you have been given?
 - (ii) Do you feel that you are getting the right amount of supervision?
 - (iii) What additional skills can you bring to your Internship?
- (h) notify the MCPHS Faculty Advisor should any problems or concerns arise.

7. PRECEPTOR RESPONSIBILITIES. The Preceptor shall:

- (a) provide an Internship experience that includes the goals/objectives and projects described above;
- (b) provide an interim assessment of the Student Intern and discuss the results of such assessment with the Student Intern;
- (c) complete a performance assessment of the Student Intern upon completion of the Internship; and
- (d) notify the MCPHS Faculty Advisor if problems arise with the Student Intern.

8. MISCELLANEOUS.

- (a) The work performed in the Internship is an integral part of the Intern's course of academic study, and satisfactory completion of the Internship is a requirement of the curriculum.
- (b) The Intern is not entitled to a job or employment with the Preceptor at the completion of the Internship.
- (c) The Intern is not entitled to wages or compensation for the time spent in the Internship.
- (d) Violation of this Agreement may result in termination of the Internship.

- (e) *If the Internship is conducted at the Student Intern's place of employment, Internship activities must be different from the Student Intern's job duties/activities and not conducted during paid working hours.*

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement as of the latest date set forth next to their signatures below.

PRECEPTOR:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

STUDENT:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

FACULTY ADVISOR:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

MCPHS UNIVERSITY

By _____

Date: _____

Caroline S. Zeind, PharmD, RPh
Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost

MCPHS University

MPH Practice Experience Portfolio Guidance

Every Master of Public Health (MPH) student is required to develop a portfolio that thoroughly captures the students' experiences and demonstrates achievement of at least three foundational competencies and at least two concentration competencies (self-selected). It must also include at least two "products" that show achievement of the competencies and are meaningful to the organization at which the student completed their practice experience. Examples include written assignments, projects, videos, multi-media presentations, spreadsheets, websites, posters, photos or other digital artifacts of learning. The portfolio is intended to be relevant to the student's professional development and allow faculty to assess the applied practice experience.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIRED SECTIONS FOR THE PORTFOLIO?

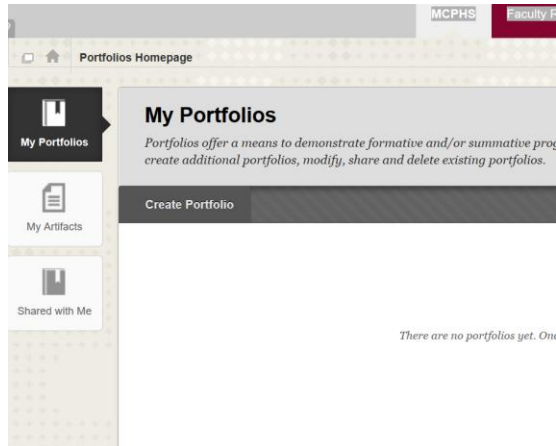
1. Project proposal – this section of the portfolio is an updated version of the project proposal you submitted in the beginning of the course containing: title, overview of the site, competency attainment (at least three foundational and two concentration competencies), work products, and an abstract summary. The proposal should not only incorporate feedback from the graded assignment, but also update any items that have changed since the beginning of the practice experience.
2. Signed internship agreement – once the Provost signs your internship agreement, the faculty member will send the signed agreement back to the student for portfolio submission.
3. 1-2 page reflection of competency attainment and overall practice experience – reflection should describe the student's practice experience, reflect on attainment of competencies, and comment on the overall experience as a professional opportunity (examples of comments may include whether it met/did not meet expectations, enhanced professional development, and/or furthered career opportunities)
4. Template D5-1 – this excel spreadsheet is a requirement from our accreditor, the Council on Education for Public Health. You will be asked to list your work products and the specific competencies you achieved through the work products. Ideally, you would link the competencies to each work product.
5. Work products – this section includes a minimum of two work products that demonstrate 1) attainment of the foundational and/or concentration competencies and 2) products that are meaningful to the organization at which the student completed their practice experience.

HOW WILL YOUR PORTFOLIO BE SUBMITTED AND REVIEWED?

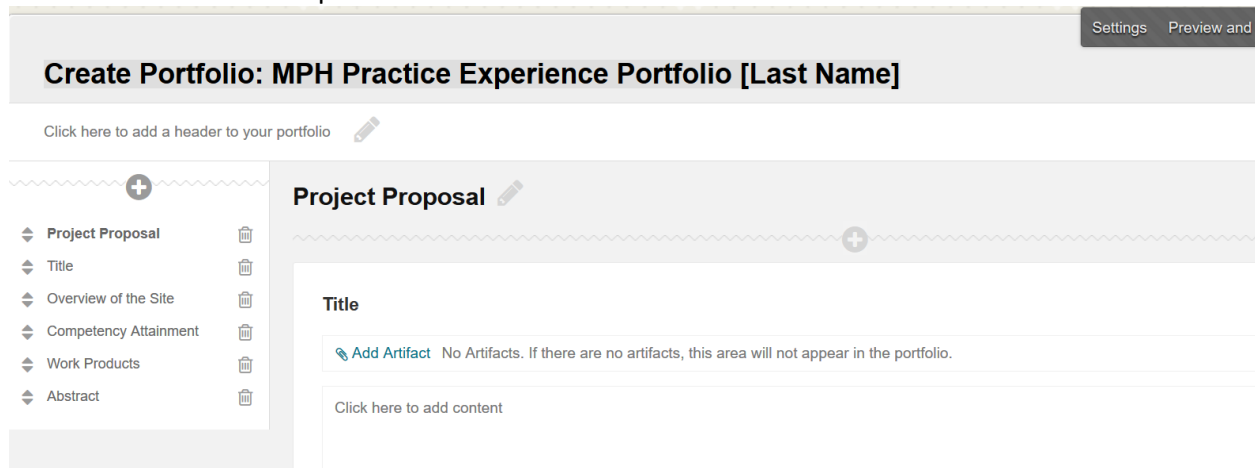
For this assignment, you will be using the Portfolio tool in Blackboard. Here are some instructions and screen shots for developing this portfolio.

- 1) Click on 'Tools' and then navigate to  'Portfolio Homepage.'

- 2) Click on 'Create Portfolio'



- 3) Alternatively, in the assignment link, click on 'Create Portfolio.'
- 4) In the title, name it 'MPH Practice Experience Portfolio [Insert Last Name] and click submit. At this point, it will ask you if you want a tour of Portfolio.
- 5) Create a 'page' for each required section of the portfolio and a section for each component within. See example:



- 6) In the Work Products section, you can add the products as artifacts by clicking on 'Add Artifact' and uploading it.
- 7) You can customize it and then when you are done, you can click 'done editing.'

MPH Practice Experience Portfolio Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Sufficient	Minimal	Unacceptable
Required Components ____/15	Portfolio includes all four components and meets or exceeds all requirements. Each section or part of the assignment is addressed thoroughly. All attachments and/or additional documents are included, as required. (12-15 points)	Portfolio includes all components and meets all requirements. Each section or part of the assignment is addressed. All attachments and/or additional documents are included, as required. (8-11 points)	Portfolio is missing some components or does not fully meet the requirements. Some sections or parts of the assignment are not addressed. Some attachments and additional documents, if required, are missing or unsuitable. (4-7 points)	Portfolio excludes essential components or does not address the requirements. Most sections of the assignment are addressed minimally, inadequately, and/or not at all. (0-3 points)
Depth of Reflection ____/15	Reflection demonstrates an in-depth reflection on, and personalization of, the competencies addressed and professional experiences. Viewpoints and interpretations are insightful and well supported. Clear, detailed examples are provided, as applicable. (12-15 points)	Reflection demonstrates a general reflection on, and personalization of, the competencies addressed and professional experiences. Viewpoints and interpretations are supported. Appropriate examples are provided, as applicable. (8-11 points)	Reflection demonstrates a minimal reflection on, and personalization of, the competencies addressed and professional experiences. Viewpoints and interpretations are unsupported or supported with flawed arguments. Examples, when applicable, are not provided or are irrelevant to the assignment. (4-7 points)	Reflection demonstrates a lack of reflection on, or personalization of, the competencies addressed and professional experiences. Viewpoints and interpretations are missing, inappropriate, and/or unsupported. Examples, when applicable, are not provided. (0-3 points)
Competency Attainment ____/25	Relates the goals in the internship agreement to the practice experience. Demonstration of full knowledge and achievement of the foundational and community health competencies with explanations and elaboration. (20-25 points)	Relates most of the goals in the internship agreement to the practice experience. Demonstration of full knowledge and achievement of the foundational and community health competencies with explanations and elaboration. (14-19 points)	Relates the goals in the internship agreement to the practice experience. Fails to demonstrate knowledge and achievement of the foundational and community health competencies with explanations and elaboration. (8-13 points)	Fails to relate the goals in the internship agreement to the practice experience. Fails to demonstrate knowledge and achievement of the foundational and community health competencies with explanations and elaboration. (0-7 points)

