



---

COLLEGE *of*  
PUBLIC HEALTH

---

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

***East Tennessee State University  
College of Public Health  
MHA Field Experience:  
Guidelines  
2020-2021***

*Updated: April 2021*

*These guidelines provide important information relevant to your MHA Field Experience course (5850). This practical application experience allows the student to demonstrate attainment of at least five MHA competencies. This opportunity to learn while at the same time gaining health administration work experience is made possible through the cooperative efforts of a broad array of public and private health related affiliate organizations.*

*As you complete this experience, you will maximize its benefits if you put forth your utmost effort and take initiative. Students who realize the most value from their Field Experience are those who put the most into it. Dive in, be inquisitive and show initiative in seeking out opportunities to demonstrate your competence and skills. Likewise, use this opportunity to develop a professional network that will be invaluable to you as you pursue your professional goals both short term and for years to come.*

*All of us at the ETSU College of Public Health offer you our best wishes for a highly successful Field Experience. Make the most of the adventures you are about to encounter, and do not hesitate to call on your departmental professional advisor if we can be of assistance in any way.*

***East Tennessee State University's Non-Discrimination Policy:***

East Tennessee State University is a member of the state university and community college system of Tennessee governed by its Board of Trustees. East Tennessee State University is an AA/EEO employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, veteran status, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Interim Equal Employment Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator and may be contacted at: 206 Burgin E. Dossett Hall, Johnson City, TN 37614, 423-439-4445. Additionally, the Title IX Coordinator is designated to monitor and oversee Title IX complaints.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

MHA Field Experience Guidelines	5
MHA Competencies & Field Assessments	6 – 7
Establishing the Field Experience Location	8
Checklist for MHA Field Experience	9
Policy Statements on Drug Screens & Background Checks	10

## MHA FIELD EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

The MHA Field Experience provides an opportunity for students to gain practical skills and to demonstrate their ability to apply health administration concepts and competencies in a practice setting relevant to their concentration area. During your experience, you are expected to use your knowledge and skills through the application of health administration theories and principles to the development of a portfolio approach that includes at least two products in a selected domain of professional practice. Field Experience accounts for 3 credit hours and may be completed in one semester and you will enroll in HSMP 5850. **Note: Students are eligible for the APE after they have completed the following requirements: successful completion of all three MHA Foundational Courses (HSMP 5200, HSMP 5040, EPID 5100) and at least 3 additional courses in the program. If you have any questions regarding eligibility, please contact the MHA Coordinator and Advisor at [MHA@etsu.edu](mailto:MHA@etsu.edu).**

In consultation with your **Department Professional Advisor (DPA)**, who will serve as your Instructor for your Field Experience course, you will select a facet of health administration practice that is of particular interest to you and appropriate to your program of study and professional goals. Your **MHA Academic Advisor** will confirm your academic eligibility to enroll in the Field Experience course upon submission of your Field Experience application.

You, in concert with your **DPA**, and affiliate preceptor (practice supervisor) will develop a set of competency-based practice experience **learning objectives** to be achieved during your practice experience. You and your **DPA** will select and discuss which MHA competencies will be appropriate for you. **NOTE: Students are expected to demonstrate attainment of at least five competencies.**

Students with at least three years of full-time supervisory/managerial experience in health administration may be eligible for exemption from this course. Exemption request approval decisions are made by the MHA Operations Committee.

### Deadlines for Field Experience

Field Experience semester	Application submitted by...	Field site confirmed by...
Summer semester	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday in February	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday in March
Fall semester	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday in March	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday in April
Spring semester	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday in October	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday in November

**NOTE:** Failure to meet these deadlines may result in delaying your field experience (and in turn your graduation) by one semester or longer. **Do not procrastinate; start soon!**

## ***MHA PROGRAM COMPETENCIES***

**All students are expected to apply a minimum of five MHA Foundational Competencies by completing at least five objectives pertaining to their APE work products. MHA Foundational Competencies are listed below:**

1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice.
2. Select data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context.
3. Analyze data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate.
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice.
5. Compare the organization, structure, and function of health care, public health, and regulatory systems across national and international settings.
6. Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health.
7. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs.
8. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention.
9. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management.
10. Select methods to evaluate public health programs.
11. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence.
12. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes.
13. Apply principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decisions.
14. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges.
15. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.
16. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams (teams and teamwork, values and ethics).
17. Apply systems thinking tools to a health issue.
18. Apply legal and ethical principles to issues of health services management and policy analysis.
19. Apply principles of strategic planning and marketing in health services organizations.
20. Apply quality and performance improvement concepts and tools to address organizational performance.
21. Apply principles of human resources management in health services organizations.
22. Apply key principles of accounting and financial management in health services organizations.
23. Utilize analytical methods and informatics resources to investigate health and health services.
24. Discuss main components and issues of the organization, financing and delivery of health services in the U.S.
25. Demonstrate written and oral skills for communicating health policy and management issues with different audiences.
26. Leverage health data and leadership skills to facilitate/inform organizational or community change.

## FIELD ASSESSMENTS\*

<b>ASSESSMENT TYPE</b>	<b>COMPETENCIES ADDRESSED</b>
<b>Initial Deliverables:</b>	Set of 5 or more competencies as described above
MHA Competencies & Objectives	
<b>Mid-Term Deliverables:</b>	
Mid-Term Preceptor Evaluation	
Mid-Term Student Self-Assessment	
Mid-Term Time Sheet	
<b>Final Deliverables:</b>	
Final Preceptor Evaluation	
Final Student Self-Assessment	
Final Oral Presentation	
Final Field Products	
Final Time Sheet	

\*For details of these assessments, please consult the Field course syllabus.

**ESTABLISHING THE FIELD EXPERIENCE LOCATION:  
AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION AND PRECEPTOR CRITERIA**

***The intent of this experience is for students to receive a real-world experience in health administration practice. An essential piece of this is the student researching, locating and securing his or her own Field Experience location. Students need to find a site and align with their career goals. Students will personally contact potential organizations seeking a placement and will complete requirements specific to the organization.***

***Affiliate Organization and Preceptor Recommendations:***

Preceptors and affiliated organizations are established on the basis of recommendations from faculty, students and other health services professionals. A current listing of approved affiliate organizations is located on the [College of Public Health website](#).

***Affiliate Organization Recommendations:***

1. Provide one or more health or health-related services
2. Consider participation in field training to be a professional commitment
3. Offer one or more ongoing programs, which can provide the student with meaningful learning opportunities, including operational experience
4. Have competent staff who are interested in ensuring the student learns as much as possible while in the agency and can provide assistance and guidance whenever appropriate
5. Provide necessary resources and support to the student to facilitate completion of any projects or tasks assigned as part of his/her practice experience
6. Be able to meet with student at least monthly to discuss progress and assignments with student

***Methods for Approving Preceptors:***

Students identify a qualified preceptor at their Field Experience organization in consultation with and approval of their DPA. The preceptor is typically the director of the facility, the head of the department or organizational unit that will be hosting the student or their designee. As such, the preceptor is a working professional with sufficient professional experience to train students health administration practice and to evaluate their ability to apply the competencies of their degree program. It is expected that preceptors have two or more years of health administration related experience and are recognized by their organization to provide the required level of training for health administration students.

***Preceptors are approved based on the following recommendations:***

1. Ability to facilitate interaction and communication with others in the organization
2. Professional qualifications to fulfill the learning needs of the student as described above
3. Belief in the professional obligation of preceptors and interest in teaching
4. Capacity to assign duties and provide necessary resources to the student
5. Willingness to devote time to field activities including planning and supervision
6. Commitment to evaluating the student's performance relative to the program competencies
7. Interest in working with the college faculty

## CHECKLIST FOR MHA APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

### **Student's Role:**

- Develop list of potential practice experience sites \*see [Affiliation List on COPH Website](#)
  - *If interested in an international placement please email [COPHfield@etsu.edu](mailto:COPHfield@etsu.edu) and note "International Field Experience" in the subject line*
- Identify appropriate practice site(s)
- Schedule an appointment with Department Professional Advisor (DPA) to discuss practice site, objectives and career goals for the practice experience
  - It is critical to meet with the DPA and begin the process of arranging the Field Experience early in the semester before your experience is to occur. You cannot start the Field Experience without a properly executed *Internship Affiliation Agreement (MOU)* in place
- Contact organizations regarding a placement and schedule interview (if needed)
- Submit field application before the [deadline](#)
- *The practice site does not have to be confirmed to submit the application but a current MOU (affiliation agreement) must be completed before the internship can begin. If we do not have an affiliation agreement for the organization the application must be completed and submitted prior to the deadline to allow time for the MOU to be processed.*

### **Required documents:**

1. Student [application](#)
2. MOU in place for Field Experience site

### **Applied Practice Experience Application Deadlines**

*Second Friday in February for Summer*

*Second Friday in March for Fall Placements*

*Second Friday in October for Spring Placements*

Field application must be submitted [electronically](#).

### **DPA's Role:**

- Work with student to determine appropriate practice site possibilities (if needed). The [Affiliated Organization Listing](#) can be found on the college website
- Meet with student to discuss objectives and career goals for the practice experience
- Follow-up with student to ensure they have submitted the necessary paperwork (see above) to the Field Internship Coordinator and have secured a practice site
- Facilitate the Field Experience course per course specifications

### **Field Placement Coordinator's Role:**

- Process MOUs for unaffiliated organizations
- Process applications
- Distribute field roster to executive aids for course creation
- Assist students interested in an international placement

## ***POLICY STATEMENT ON DRUG SCREENS, CRIMINAL AND SEX OFFENDER BACKGROUND CHECKS, IMMUNIZATION AND LIABILITY INSURANCE***

**Drug Screens:** It is the policy of this university that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, use of alcohol and illicit drugs on the ETSU campus in the workplace (on or off campus), on property owned or controlled by ETSU, or as part of any activity of ETSU is strictly prohibited. All employees and students are subject to applicable federal, state and local laws related to this matter. Additionally, any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action. Therefore, the use of alcohol and/or the use of illegal drugs by public health students while engaged in their practice experience are strictly prohibited. As this policy refers to positive drug/alcohol screen procedures, the following definitions of “positive” will be used:

1. Screen results indicating use of an illegal drug;
2. Screen results indicating non-therapeutic drug level of prescribed or non-prescribed drugs;
3. Screen results indicating presence of alcohol in blood.

**Criminal Background checks:** If an affiliate organization requires or requests a criminal background check as a condition of the practice experience or other opportunity, our students are required to comply at their personal expense.

**Sex Offender checks:** If an affiliate organization requires or requests a sex offender registry check (in the context of children, adult or elderly sexual abuse) as a condition of a practice experience or other opportunity, our students are required to comply at their personal expense.

**Immunizations:** If an affiliate organization requires or requests a proof of immunizations including flu shots, as a condition of the practice experience or other opportunity, our students are required to comply at their personal expense.

**Professional Liability Insurance:** If an affiliate organization requires or requests a proof of professional liability insurance, as a condition of the practice experience or other opportunity, our students are required to comply at their personal expense. The recommendation is to purchase liability insurance from either Nursing Service Organization [www.nso.com](http://www.nso.com) or Healthcare Professionals Service Organization [www.hpsso.com](http://www.hpsso.com)

**What does this mean to you?:** An [affiliate organization](#) can require and conduct drug screening during an applied practice experience without cause if such screenings are the policy for employees of that organization or affiliate. Should an affiliate organization request/require a prospective student intern undergo a criminal and/or sex offender background check the student will be required to provide that check at their personal expense. There are many background checking agencies and the expense is fairly minimal and many background checking services can provide criminal and sex offender checks simultaneously. You can ask the affiliate organization who they use or you can locate several via the Internet. An unsatisfactory criminal background and/or sex offender check might preclude students from fulfilling their mandatory practice experience/practicum requirement, which in turn could preclude meeting graduation requirements. Students should also provide proofs of immunizations and professional liability insurance as required by an affiliate organization.