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COLLEGE *of*  
PUBLIC HEALTH

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EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

***East Tennessee State University  
College of Public Health  
MPH Applied Practice Experience:  
GUIDELINES  
2019-2020***

*Updated: April 2020*

*These guidelines provide important information relevant to your MPH Applied Practice Experience course (5850). This practical application experience allows the student to demonstrate attainment of at least five MPH competencies of which at least three must be foundational competencies (see further). This opportunity to learn while at the same time gaining public health 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 Applied Practice 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 Applied Practice 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.

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## MPH APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

The MPH Applied Practice Experience (APE) provides an opportunity for students to gain practical skills and to demonstrate their ability to apply public health concepts and competencies in a practice setting relevant to their concentration area. During your practice experience, you are expected to use your knowledge and skills through the application of public health theories and principles to the development of a portfolio approach that includes at least two products in a selected domain of professional public health practice. APE accounts for 6 credit hours and may be completed in one semester or two separate semesters at 3 credit hours each. You will enroll in the Public Health Program APE course under your concentration for one six hour or two three credit hour courses.

**Note: Students are eligible for the APE after they have completed the following requirements: successful completion of all MPH Foundational Courses and at least 2 concentration courses. If you have any questions regarding eligibility, please contact the MPH Coordinator and Advisor at [MPHCoordinator@etsu.edu](mailto:MPHCoordinator@etsu.edu).**

In consultation with your **Department Professional Advisor (DPA)**, who will serve as your Instructor for your APE course, you will select a facet of public health practice that is of particular interest to you and appropriate to your program of study and professional goals. Your **MPH Academic Advisor** will confirm your academic eligibility to enroll in the APE 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 MPH foundational competencies and concentration-specific competencies will be appropriate for you. **NOTE:** Students are expected to demonstrate attainment of **at least** five competencies. At least three of these must be foundational competencies.

Students with **at least four years** of full-time public health practice experience (at the time of application for the Alternate Field Experience) may be eligible for the **Alternate Field Request, which consists of 150 hours rather than the standard 300 hours. Students must complete the "Alternate Field Request" form on the [College's website](#). Application approval decisions are made by the MPH Operations Committee.** DPAs will write letters of recommendation for Alternate Field Request applicants.

### Deadlines for Applied Practice Experience

APE semester	Application submitted by...	Field site confirmed by...
Summer semester	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday in March	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday in April
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 practice experience (and in turn your graduation) by one semester or longer. **Do not procrastinate; start soon!**

## **MPH FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES**

All students, regardless of their Concentration, are expected to apply a minimum of three **MPH Foundational Competencies** by completing at least three objectives pertaining to their APE work products. **MPH Foundational Competencies are listed below:**

### ***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 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.

## ***MPH CONCENTRATION COMPETENCIES***

In addition to applying the MPH Foundational Competencies, MPH Concentration Competencies address the student's specified concentration. All students are expected to apply two or more **MPH Concentration Competencies** by completing at least two objectives pertaining to their APE work products. Concentration specific competencies are listed in alphabetical order.

### ***BSTA 5850 Biostatistics Concentration Competencies***

BSTA 5850, ***Biostatistics Applied Practice Experience***, addresses primarily the **MPH Biostatistics Concentration** competencies. The competencies are numbered, and the associated learning objectives will be student-specific.

1. Design a plan of data analysis for a population-based study incorporating the use of biostatistical methods for sample selection, randomization, power calculations, and advanced statistical techniques.
2. Manage and prepare data sets for analysis of public health problems.
3. Use SAS to implement advanced analytical approaches for complex data structures.
4. Using public data, formulate research questions to address public health issues.
5. Examine the study designs and analytic methods used for contemporary human subject protocols.
6. Appraise the plans of data analysis in peer-reviewed, published literature on human clinical research.
7. Perform longitudinal data analysis or categorical data analysis of public health data, including parameter estimates, confidence intervals, and statistics which quantify the fit of the model.
8. Assess potential interaction and confounding in statistical modeling of categorical or longitudinal data.
9. Produce working tables, figures, and statistical summaries describing research in health science.

### ***COBH 5850 Community Health Concentration Competencies***

COBH 5850, ***Community Health Applied Practice Experience***, addresses primarily the **MPH Community Health Concentration** competencies. The competencies are numbered, and the associated learning objectives will be student-specific.

1. Apply appropriate evidence-based methods and theoretical models to plan and evaluate community health programs or services through a longitudinal community-based project.
2. Apply both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to assess community health capacity and evaluate the efficacy of community-based health programs or services through a longitudinal project.
3. Apply ethical and social justice principles when identifying and addressing individual and community needs.
4. Engage communities by applying community-based participatory research principles through a longitudinal community-based project.
5. Employ effective consulting and advocacy strategies to strengthen community partnerships through a longitudinal community-based project.
6. Develop and disseminate effective health communication and social marketing programs using appropriate tools and resources.

## ***ENVH 5850 Environmental Health Concentration Competencies***

ENVH 5850, ***Environmental Health Applied Practice Experience***, addresses primarily the **MPH Environmental Health Concentration** competencies. The competencies are numbered, and the associated learning objectives will be student-specific.

1. Describe the current environmental risk assessment process, risk communication strategies and identify the implications of risk management decisions in relationship to environmental justice.
2. Analyze and apply quantitative and qualitative research data to evaluate environmental health programs at the local, state, national or international level.
3. Describe the respective roles played by stakeholders, researchers, enforcement agencies and the courts in environmental regulation.
4. Propose environmental health approaches for controlling exposures and apply them to problems and scenarios.
5. Explain general mechanisms of toxicity in eliciting a toxic response to various chemical exposures including factors affecting susceptibility and the human, ecological, and safety effects of major environmental chemical hazards.
6. Analyze the role of environmental programs in community environmental health management.
7. Evaluate common technical, management, legal and social issues that govern the operation of environmental health programs.
8. Conduct a thorough literature review with properly cited and referenced peer-reviewed sources in support of environmental health research.

## ***EPID 5850 Epidemiology Concentration Competencies***

EPID 5850, ***Epidemiology Applied Practice Experience***, addresses primarily the **MPH Epidemiology Concentration** competencies. The competencies are numbered, and the associated learning objectives will be student-specific.

1. Design a plan of data analysis for a population-based study incorporating the use of biostatistical methods for sample selection, randomization, power calculations, and advanced statistical techniques.
2. Manage and prepare data sets for analysis of public health problems.
3. Use SAS to implement advanced analytical approaches for complex data structures.
4. Using public data, formulate research questions to address public health issues.
5. Distinguish and defend the theoretical principles, procedures, and applications of epidemiologic study designs used to address epidemiologic issues of consequence.
6. Critique epidemiologic methods (e.g., study designs, measurement, analytic methods) used in published literature.
7. Formulate a model of the causal inference process, including strengths and weaknesses.
8. Assess and synthesize epidemiologic literature for issues of public health importance to include chronic or infectious disease from historical and contemporary contexts.
9. Demonstrate skills in intermediate epidemiologic methods to access, evaluate, and interpret public health data.



**HSMP 5850 Public Health Administration Concentration Competencies**

HSMP 5850, *Public Health Administration Applied Practice Experience*, addresses primarily the **MPH Public Health Administration Concentration** competencies. The competencies are numbered, and the associated learning objectives will be student-specific.

1. Interpret legal principles and quality standards to ensure compliance in health services organizations.
2. Utilize principles of financial and workforce planning in health services organizations.
3. Apply quality and performance improvement concepts and tools to address organizational performance.
4. Apply principles of human resources management in health services organizations.
5. Apply key principles of accounting and financial management in health services organizations.
6. Leverage health data and leadership skills to inform organizational or community-level change.
7. Utilize analytical methods and informatics resources to investigate health and health services.

**APE ASSESSMENTS\***

<b>ASSESSMENT TYPE</b>	<b>COMPETENCIES ADDRESSED</b>
<b>Initial Deliverables:</b>	Set of 5 or more competencies (Foundational and Concentration) as described above
APE 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 APE Products	
Final Time Sheet	

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

## **ESTABLISHING THE APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE LOCATION: AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION AND PRECEPTOR CRITERIA**

***The intent of this experience is for students to receive a real-world experience in public health practice. An essential piece of this is the student researching, locating and securing his or her own APE location. Students need to find a site within their concentration 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 public health/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 APE 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 in public health practice and to evaluate their ability to apply the competencies of their respective degree program. It is expected that preceptors have two or more years of public health related experience and are recognized by their organization to provide the required level of training for public health 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 MPH 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*
  - *Students with full-time public health experience may qualify for an Alternate Field Request. The application is available on the [college website](#). Please see student handbook for more information.*
- 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 APE early in the semester before your experience is to occur. You cannot start the APE 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 APE site
3. [Alternate field request](#) (if applicable)

**Applied Practice Experience Application Deadlines**  
**Second Friday in March for Summer and 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 APE 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 Nursing Service Organization [www.nso.com](http://www.nso.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.