

Frequently Asked Questions: MPH Practica

What do students do in practicum?

- Students can complete a wide array of projects as long as they connect to the foundational competencies of public health, and the specialization competencies if the student is specializing. For more information about these competencies, please contact Ragini Maddipati at rmaddipati@wustl.edu.
- Sample tasks and projects include research; data analysis; disease mapping; health education; program planning, implementation, and evaluation; policy analysis; health impact assessments; and health advocacy.

When are students eligible to do their practicum?

- Following Brown School's suggested academic sequencing for the MPH program, most students begin the MPH practicum in the summer between first and second year
- Students must complete seven courses prior to the public health practicum, which include five foundation courses in Public Health, Cross-Cutting Themes and Research Methods as well as pre-requisite courses for specializing. These courses prepare students for a variety of activities in the field.

What is a field instructor?

A field instructor is a professional who must have:

- At least two years of post-graduate experience and demonstrated expertise in the field
- A minimum of one year employment at the practicum organization.
- Support and approval from organization to serve as a field instructor
- Ability to provide at least one hour of individual, weekly supervision per student

What are the responsibilities of the field instructor?

- Define the role and scope of the student in practicum

- Orient student to the staff, clients, culture, policies and procedures of the organization
- Supervise a maximum of three students per semester
- Assist the student in completion of the Educational Learning Agreement (ELA)
- Provide a minimum of one hour per week, face to face, individual supervision
- Participate in a site visit to discuss the student(s) progress
- Commit to graduate-level field education by:
 - Being attentive to individual student needs
 - Supporting and mentoring students' professional development
 - Sharing professional expertise and providing ongoing feedback
- Provide student with adequate work space i.e., access to office equipment, computer, telephone, etc.
- Review students' self-evaluation and complete a final evaluation
- Contact the OFE
 - Should any problems/concerns arise
 - If there is any change in contact information for the field instructor or organization
 - If there are excessive unexcused absences of the student or field instructor

How long does it take for students to complete practicum?

- Practicum hours are scheduled based on a student's educational plan and the organization's need
- Schedules are negotiated between the student and the field instructor
- Practicum can be completed on a part-time or full-time basis totaling up to no more than 40 hours per week

How do I attract students to my agency?

- Students follow a process of self- or- guided selection
- Agencies develop flyers and brochures for posting and advertisement
- Practicum Agency Fair is held every spring semester
- Agency on-campus visits are available every semester

Are students covered for professional liability while at practicum?

- Washington University carries a primary \$2 million insurance policy for its various professional fields and covers duly registered Brown School students
- Upon written request, proof of coverage may be obtained by contacting the OFE