

Guidelines for the Field Experience

Department of Community and Family Health

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Introduction

A supervised field experience is a requirement for MPH students in the Department of Community and Family Health. The supervised field experience provides an opportunity for the student to gain valuable knowledge and experience outside the classroom, the college and the department. The field experience should take place outside the College (e.g., in health services organizations—such as managed care or hospitals, clinics, state or county-level health departments; public health programs at other Universities). Field experiences are typically not permitted at the student's current place of employment. The specific location of the field placement is to be agreed upon among the student, his/her faculty advisor and the COPH Field Placement Coordinator (FPC).

Objectives of the Supervised Field Experience

The specific objectives of the supervised field experience are:

1. To provide the student with the opportunity to utilize knowledge and practice new skills learned in the MPH coursework.
2. To expose the student to a broader range of public health activities than the student has experienced to date.
3. To contribute to the student's professional education through assignments that are useful to the field organization and that refine the student's professional skills.
4. To help the student to identify his or her own professional strengths and weaknesses and areas of knowledge for further study.

Administrative Guidelines for the Supervised Field Experience

The field experience typically occurs after the student has completed (30) credit hours of the MPH program, including all College core courses. If a student has no prior experience, then the advisor may recommend she/he do a "graduated" field experience in which such experience is gained throughout the course of study.

The number of credit hours (6-12) needed in the field experience is determined by the student's advisor after carefully reviewing the student's record and experience. For each semester credit hour the student is expected to spend a minimum of (45) contact hours in the field during the semester in which the student is enrolled for the credit hours (e.g. 3 credit hrs = 135 contact hrs). It is preferred that students spend a minimum of 12 weeks at the field placement site, although special arrangements can be made with the approval of the student's advisor, the FPC and the site supervisor.

Students are encouraged to take six or more credits of field experience. An exception may be made if the student has 2-3 years of experience in a concentration-related clinical background or agency, in which case less field experience may be suitable. Students in the Health Education concentration must enroll for (6) hours of field experience over a two-semester period.

A Supervised Field Experience Application and Agreement form must be submitted to the FPC and the Office of Academics by the end of the first week of the semester in which the field experience is to occur. To the extent possible, the agreement should specify the expectations for the student's participation (e.g., physical space requirements and availability for the student, special work conditions, hours of work, products, activities, travel).

For students doing a field placement in which a formal affiliation agreement between the College and the field agency is necessary, **the affiliation agreement must be on file with the advisor, the FPC and the Office of Academics within two weeks of the beginning of the semester during which the field experience is to occur.** Contact the FPC to determine if this form is necessary.

Responsibilities

Supervision of the student during the field experience is a joint responsibility of the agency in which the field experience is taking place and the student's advisor or the advisor's designee.

Student

1. Assume lead responsibility for identifying suitable field experience sites and supervisors. The FPC or student's advisors can often recommend sites based on the student's goals and experience. The student should discuss these options with the FPC or their advisor the semester before the intended field experience.
2. Initiate the activities necessary for the completion of the *Supervised Field Experience Application and Agreement*, the agreement between the student, faculty advisor, site supervisor and FPC, and the *affiliation agreement*, if necessary.
3. Submit a proposal for the field experience to the faculty advisor before beginning the supervised field experience. The proposal should include the goals, objectives, and activities of the field experience and the responsibilities of the agency. The proposal must be developed jointly by the student, the advisor, and the site supervisor. **This plan must be submitted to the FPC by the end of the first week of classes.**
4. Attend the Supervised Field Experience orientation program held during the first week of classes.

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5. Participate fully in the field opportunity, performing activities necessary to complete the field experience as defined in the proposal and agreements; complete and send all necessary assignments to the faculty advisor and FPC throughout the semester.
6. Follow the rules, procedures, and customs of the field organization.
7. Maintain regular communication with the faculty advisor.
8. Provide appropriate feedback to the site supervisor, advisor and FPC. *Standard evaluation forms* are available for this purpose.
9. Attend the debriefing session during the final week of the semester.

Faculty Advisor

1. Carefully assess students' academic preparation, experience, and professional development to identify areas to address in the field experience.
2. Assist the student in developing goals and outlining the educational and experiential objectives of the field experience. The number of credit hours to be taken will be determined by the goals and objectives, and the student's previous experience in public health.
3. Assist the student in identifying suitable field sites and supervisors.
4. Review and approve the prospective site and supervisor and the written proposal for the field experience.
5. Respond to requests from the site supervisor for information about the placement experience and the student.
6. Consult as necessary with the FPC to address issues relating to the field experience.
7. Review the site supervisor's evaluation of the student's work during the field experience.
8. Evaluate the student's field experience assignments.

Field Experience Placement Coordinator

1. Identification, recruitment and orientation of appropriate field placement sites / supervisors.
2. Collaboration and communication with faculty advisors related to student needs and progress.
3. Monitoring students during field experience as needed through site visits and email communications.
4. Notification of faculty about students' completion of all field experience requirements.

Agency / Site Supervisor

1. Meet with student seeking placement; assist in developing and approval of the field experience proposal.
2. Provide a current resume or curriculum vitae to the FPC.
3. Provide the student with a formal orientation to the agency.
4. Provide direct supervision to the student and establish an ongoing relationship during the field experience that includes regular reporting.
5. Provide resources necessary for a successful field experience including office space, desk, supplies and the opportunity to observe major agency functions.
6. Be accessible to resolve issues or problems that may arise.
7. Respond to the faculty advisor's requests for information regarding the student's performance and the status of the field experience.
8. Provide the FPC a written evaluation of the student's performance at the end of the field experience using the *standardized evaluation form* provided by the College. In the evaluation, an assessment of "Satisfactory" versus "Unsatisfactory" performance should be made.

Waiver of Field Experience

For a very small portion of students, the faculty advisor may waive the field experience requirement. A student who seeks a waiver of this requirement must complete the *Supervised Field Experience Waiver* form and include a statement justifying the request. The statement should clearly state the experiences and education the student has had that demonstrate that the field experience is not necessary for further professional development; the experiences and education should be documented. The faculty advisor and Associate Dean of Academics must approve the waiver.

FE Contact Information

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Field Experience Sites¹

Community and Family Health

Agency	Program	Agency Division	City	State	Web Site Address
Alachua General Hospital—Shands			Gainesville	FL	www.shands.org
American Association for Retired Persons			Washington	DC	www.aarp.org
American Heart Association		Greater Southeast Affiliate	Marietta	GA	www.americanheart.org
Family Support & Resource Center/Bright Beginnings			Tampa	FL	
Francis House, Inc.			Tampa	FL	www.francishouse.org
Gulfcoast North Area Health Education Center		Community Health Education	Land O'Lakes	FL	www.gnahec.org
Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center			Sarasota	FL	http://www.gsahec.org/
H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research		Division of Infectious Diseases and	Tampa	FL	http://www.moffitt.usf.edu/about_moffitt/press/press_releases/2005/20050103b.

¹ **Housing Considerations**

Hostelling International <http://www.hihostels.com/openHome.sma>

Washington, DC <http://www.internsdc.com/>

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Institute		Tropical Medicine			asp
H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute		Lifetime Cancer Screening	Tampa	FL	http://www.moffitt.usf.edu/
H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute	Risk Assessment, Detection and Intervention Program	Cancer Prevention and Control Division	Tampa	FL	http://www.moffitt.usf.edu/
Hillsborough County Health Department		Community Health	Tampa	FL	http://www.hillscountyhealth.org/
Inland Yoga			Riverside	CA	
James A. Haley V A Hospital		Nursing Home Care Unit	Tampa	FL	http://www.appc1.va.gov/visn8/Tampa/facilities/tampa.asp
James A. Haley Veterans Hospital		Interprofessional Team Training and Development	Tampa	FL	http://www.appc1.va.gov/visn8/Tampa/facilities/tampa.asp
Manatee County Health Department	WIC and Nutrition Program	Public Health Nutrition Program	Bradenton	FL	http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdmanatee/index.htm
Mental Health America of Greater Tampa Bay	College of Medicine	c/o University of South Florida	Tampa	FL	www.mhagreatertampabay.org
PACE Center for Girls		Song Program	Bradenton	FL	www.pacecenter.org
Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)		HIV/AIDS	Washington	DC	www.paho.org
Sarasota County Health Department		Healthy Start	Sarasota	FL	http://sarasotahealth.org/
Sarasota County Health Department		Division of Clinical and Community Health	Venice	FL	http://sarasotahealth.org/
Sarasota County School Board		Food and Nutrition Services	Osprey	FL	www.sarasota.k12.fl.us
St. Joseph's Children's Hospital		Children Advocacy Center	Tampa	FL	http://www.sjbhealth.org/body_childrens.cfm?id=38&
St. Joseph's Hospital		Psychiatry Center	Tampa	FL	http://sjbhealth.org/
University of South Florida		College of Public Health	Tampa	FL	http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/homepage.html

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University of South Florida		Area Health Education Center	Tampa	FL	http://www.hsc.usf.edu/ahec/default.html
University of South Florida	AHEC Women's Health Collaborative	College of Public Health	Tampa	FL	http://health.usf.edu/ahec/index.htm
University of South Florida	Connect to Protect Tampa Bay	College of Medicine, Dept. of Pediatrics	Tampa	FL	http://health.usf.edu/medicine/home.html
University of South Florida	Department of Child and Family Studies	Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute	Tampa	FL	www.fmhi.usf.edu

Steps to Get Started

2-3 months before your field experience

1. Meet with your faculty advisor during the semester prior to placement to receive permission to begin the process and to determine the type of placement of interest to you. Be prepared to discuss your career goals, areas of interest, professional strengths and weaknesses, skills you wish to develop preference for organization or agency, geographical location, educational needs and review your resume.
2. Review the field experience opportunities that are e-mailed to the CPH student listserv and posted in the CPH student lounge.
3. Review the list of previous field experience sites (<http://publichealth.usf.edu/academicaffairs/fe/pdf/Former%20Sites.pdf>). Narrow your selection of preferred sites and then contact the field experience coordinator for more information on your choices.
4. Make a final site selection, submit a letter of interest and resume, and request an interview with the site supervisor. Be sure to identify projects that you would like to work on at that particular site in your letter of interest.
5. Review the Association of Schools of Public Health Core Competencies for MPH students (<http://www.asph.org/userfiles/Version2.3.pdf>, page 12). Incorporate as many interdisciplinary and discipline-specific competencies into your field experience as possible.
6. Take your resume and writing/work samples to the interview. Use this time to determine the scope of potential field experiences and activities available at the site. Discuss goals, objectives, possible projects and outcomes.
7. Once the interview is complete, notify the field experience coordinator and your faculty advisor as to the outcome. If the field site does not meet your expectations, be prepared to discuss alternate sites.

1 month before your field experience

1. If you are accepted by the field site and the placement seems satisfactory, then develop a *Field Experience Plan* in consultation with your site supervisor and faculty advisor.
2. Complete the *Supervised Field Experience Application and Agreement* and the *Roles and Responsibilities* forms. Sign both forms and get original signatures from your faculty advisor and your site supervisor.
3. The faculty advisor determines the number of credit hours based on his/her knowledge of your prior academic and professional background in public health, as well as the College and Department guidelines for field experience.
4. Submit the completed and signed *Supervised Field Experience Application and Agreement* and the *Roles and Responsibilities* forms with original signatures, along with a current resume and

Field Experience Plan to the field experience coordinator. Also, submit a copy of the *Field Experience Plan* to the faculty advisor.

5. Complete the *COPH Registration Worksheet* (<http://publichealth.usf.edu/forms.html>) for the field experience class. It must be approved and signed by the faculty advisor.
6. Submit the completed and signed *COPH Registration Worksheet* to Academic and Student Affairs. The field experience coordinator will submit a copy of the *Supervised Field Experience Application and Agreement* form on your behalf. Academic and Student Affairs will issue a permit for registration within 24 business hours.
7. Go to OASIS on the USF website (<http://usfonline.admin.usf.edu/>) to complete your registration. Because the field experience has variable credit hours (from 1 to 12), the number of credit hours on OASIS must match the number of credit hours on your *Supervised Field Experience Application and Agreement* form. When registering for a variable credit course, consult registration experts in Academic and Student Affairs about changing the number of credits.
8. Attend the field experience orientation at the beginning of the semester.

During your field experience

1. Submit two reflective reports to the field experience coordinator and faculty advisor. See the *Field Experience Reports Packet* for more details. Failure to submit reports in a timely manner will affect your grade.
2. The supervisor at the agency with which you are affiliated has primary supervision during the field experience. Periodic contact by your faculty advisor and the field experience coordinator will likely occur along with a possible site visit. The student is encouraged to assist with scheduling the site visit.
3. Maintain a time log documenting field experience activities and submit it to the field experience coordinator at the conclusion of the semester. The time log must be signed by the site supervisor.

At the conclusion of your field experience

1. Arrange for an exit interview with the site supervisor to discuss the overall experience.
2. Attend the field experience debriefing at the end of the semester. Public Health Practice students are exempt from attending the debriefing program.
3. Submit an abstract of your field experience.
4. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that all of the final documentation—time log, evaluations, reports and abstract—are submitted to the field experience coordinator.
5. After all requirements have been met, the faculty advisor will assign a final grade at the end of the semester. Failure to complete all requirements in a timely fashion jeopardizes your academic credit for the field experience.