



Icahn
School of
Medicine at
Mount
Sinai

Graduate Program in Public Health



THE APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE (MPH0092, 3 credits)

Revised for Fall 2017

THE APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Description

The Applied Practice Experience (APE), formerly known as the Practicum, provides the student with an opportunity to translate theory into practice within a professional public health setting. Students will implement and practice lessons learned in the classroom, gaining exposure to new and exciting prospects for future professional development. It is a planned, supervised, and evaluated field-based experience that can take place at a variety of agencies and organizations, involving some level of community engagement. The Applied Practice Experience enables students to achieve many of the competencies necessary to be successful public health practitioners. There are abundant opportunities for the student to meet the goals and objectives of this requirement.

The student will be supervised and evaluated by an on-site preceptor. The preceptor should have an advanced degree in public health or a related field, or considerable experience and/or certifications in the field of public health.

Eligibility & Timing

Students are eligible to begin the Applied Practice Experience after completion of fifteen credits in the Program. Generally, students are prepared after they have completed coursework in the five core areas of public health: biostatistics, epidemiology, sociobehavioral health, health policy & management, and environmental health. Students must be in good academic standing in order to begin the APE.

Ideally, the Applied Practice Experience will be completed between the student's first and second year, but eligible students are welcome to complete the APE at any time throughout the year. The duration of the APE is determined between the student and the preceptor, taking into consideration the student's schedule and the needs of the practice site. Students should register for the APE in the academic term in which the experience is beginning.

Requirements

The Applied Practice Experience is a requirement for the Master of Public Health degree. All requirements and documentation must be completed and submitted to the Office of Public Health Practice before the student can earn his or her degree. A list of the requirements can be found on p. 3. Please refer to p.9, *Step-by-Step Process for Completing the Applied Practice Experience*, for more details.

Requirements for the Applied Practice Experience:

- Attendance at an APE Information Session
- Submission of the APE Proposal
- Submission of the APE Proposal Form
- Registration for MPH0092 Applied Practice Experience- 3 credits
 - Students who matriculated before Fall 2017 will register for MPH0090 Practicum- 0 credits
- Completion of a minimum 150 hours- Fieldwork
- Submission of the APE Postscript Report
- Submission of the APE Preceptor Evaluation
- Participation in a Checkout Meeting with the Office of Public Health Practice

Registration

Students must register for MPH0092 Applied Practice Experience- 3 credits for the term in which their APE is beginning. Students who matriculated prior to Fall 2017 will register for MPH0090 Practicum- 0 credits. If the APE is starting in between registration periods, the student will register during the next available registration period. Students must receive approval from the Office of Public Health Practice in order to complete their registration (Pre-requisites: APE Proposal and APE Proposal Form).

Waivers

The Applied Practice Experience is designed for students to apply graduate-level competencies to the public health practice setting. In very rare circumstances, the APE may be waived if the student has documented substantial experience in public health practice. If you think you may be eligible for a waiver, please meet with the Office of Public Health Practice.

Generally, residents in Preventive Medicine and Occupational & Environmental Medicine satisfy the Applied Practice Experience requirement through their residency requirements. In this case, the resident should submit the Alternative APE Fulfillment Form in lieu of any other required APE forms.

A Foundation for the Culminating Experience

Often times, the Applied Practice Experience can serve as the basis for the final Culminating Experience (CE), completed in the second year of the Program. It's useful to start thinking early on about how the APE might develop into a master's thesis, manuscript or capstone project. Please make sure to discuss with both your track advisor and the Office of Public Health Practice as you develop your plan. Please also note that the Applied Practice Experience and the Culminating Experience are separate requirements for the MPH Degree. You should refer to the Culminating Experience Guide for more details.

IDENTIFYING A PRACTICE SITE

Finding a practice site is much like finding any other internship or job. Location should not necessarily be a limiting factor. While there are an abundance of public health agencies and organizations in and around New York City, the APE may be completed at sites across the country or around the world.

In the past, students have met this requirement by working at the community level, for example, in East Harlem; at the city level, working with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; and at the international level, working on a disaster relief project in a foreign setting. Whatever the student's choice, the focus is on immersion into the setting selected.

The student is responsible for identifying a field placement opportunity and securing a practice site. There are several resources in place for identifying a practice site. These include:

- Office of Public Health Practice
- Specialty Track Advisor
- ISMMS Faculty
- Friday Finds (weekly bulletin)
- Blackboard Resources (Potential Placement Sites; Public Health Internship Programs)

Be proactive and build your network. Reach out to agencies and organizations directly. You can also contact course directors and faculty across ISMMS as they may be able to connect you to individuals and organizations within their networks.

Be creative. Identify potential sites that are working on issues of interest to you, and that align with your career objectives. Reach out and discuss the possibility of hosting an MPH student. Some organizations may already offer graduate-level internships. Search for these positions using online job boards, or by searching the organization's website.

Completing the APE in a Place of Employment

If a student wishes to complete the APE at his or her place of employment, the activities must be distinct in nature from the student's job description, extending beyond the student's work responsibilities. A preceptor must still agree to oversee the experience and the Office of Public Health Practice must approve the APE.

Global Health Summer Experience

The Global Health Summer Experience is a competitive fieldwork opportunity where students travel to one of our project sites around the world to gain hands-on experience working in a global health setting. Under the guidance of an ISMMS faculty advisor and an on-site mentor, students tackle some of the most challenging public health issues facing our world today.

The application for the Global Health Summer Experience opens in the Fall Term, following a Global Health Summer Information Session. Students in all specialty tracks are welcome to apply. Students who participate in the Global Health Summer Experience with the Graduate Program in Public Health may use this experience to fulfill the APE requirement. Students who choose this option are still required to adhere to all APE requirements. All requirements for the Applied Practice Experience and Global Health Summer Experience must be completed and submitted to the Office of Public Health Practice in order to receive credit for the APE.

APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE INFORMATION SESSION

Students must attend an APE Information Session prior to initiating their APE. Two sessions will be held throughout the academic year (Fall and Spring). Students who are unable to attend a scheduled session can schedule a meeting with the Office of Public Health Practice. Students who matriculate in the Fall term should attend the Fall Information Session. Students who matriculate in the Spring I and Spring II terms should attend the Spring Information Session, or schedule an appointment with the Office of Public Health Practice as needed.

THE PROPOSAL, POSTSCRIPT REPORT & EVALUATION

Proposal

All students are required to submit an Applied Practice Experience Proposal and a Proposal Form signed by the preceptor and track advisor. The proposal should include a description of the following: your anticipated project activities, roles and responsibilities (what you will be doing on a day-to-day basis); a thorough description of the site, including the preceptor's role within the site; learning objectives and program competencies to be achieved; expected duration of the APE. Please write your proposal using the outline developed by the Program. The proposal should be developed in consultation with your preceptor, and must be pre-approved by the track advisor and the Office of Public Health Practice prior to initiating the APE. Students must submit a draft of the APE Proposal to the Office of Public Health Practice for review. Students may be asked to modify the proposal until it satisfies the requirements of the APE. Once the final proposal has been developed, students will obtain signatures from their preceptor and specialty track advisor on the Proposal Form. The Proposal Form serves as an agreement between the student and preceptor. Students will submit the final proposal and signed proposal form to the Office of Public Health Practice. **Students are not permitted to begin the APE until the proposal and signed proposal form have been submitted and approved by the Office of Public Health Practice. Any hours accrued prior to obtaining approval by the Office of Public Health Practice will not count towards the APE.**

Postscript Report

Once you have completed your experience, you are ready to submit the Applied Practice Experience Postscript Report. The postscript report includes a detailed description of the APE, and a self-assessment of the accomplishment of the goals, learning objectives and competencies set forth in the beginning of the project. Please write your postscript report using the outline developed by the Program. The postscript report must be submitted to your preceptor, to your track advisor, and to the Office of Public Health Practice.

Evaluation

All students must be evaluated by their APE preceptor. Students are evaluated on their professionalism, performance, application of public health concepts, and achievement of competencies. The preceptor must complete the APE Preceptor Evaluation. Students are responsible for initiating the evaluation and for submitting the evaluation to the Office of Public Health Practice.

The APE Proposal Outline and Form, Postscript Report and Preceptor Evaluation are located in the MPH Student Organization on Blackboard.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student

1. Attend an Applied Practice Experience Information Session.
2. Identify potential practice sites based on previous experience and future career goals.
3. Develop the APE Proposal and obtain approval by the Office of Public Health Practice before the APE begins.
4. Register for MPH0092 Applied Practice Experience or MPH0090 Practicum.
5. Maintain an activity log to record all hours contributed toward the APE, and the specific activities performed.
6. Participate in progress meetings with the preceptor as requested.
7. Notify the Office of Public Health Practice if there are significant changes to the nature and scope of the APE so that it may be re-evaluated.
8. Complete a final *APE Postscript Report*. Submit the report with the *Preceptor Evaluation Form* to both the preceptor and track advisor. The preceptor and advisor should review the postscript report when evaluating the experience.
9. Schedule a checkout appointment with the Office of Public Health Practice.
10. Submit the signed proposal form, postscript report and completed evaluation to the Office of Public Health Practice at the checkout appointment.

Specialty Track Advisor

1. Assist students with identifying prospective sites and provide advice to students about site selection.
2. Provide guidance in the development of the APE Proposal.
3. Review overall progress of the student during the APE, as needed.
4. Evaluate student progress at the end of the APE by reviewing the APE postscript report and signing off on the *Preceptor Evaluation Form*.

Office of Public Health Practice

1. Orient students to the Applied Practice Experience and assist in navigating the APE process.
2. Review APE proposals for approval, and provide feedback as necessary.
3. Send a confirmation email to the preceptor with the APE Guide once a proposal is approved.
4. Conduct check-out appointments.
5. Review the postscript report and preceptor evaluation to ensure successful completion of the APE.
6. Manage student field placements and maintain the APE database.
7. Assist the student and/or preceptor in resolving any issues that may arise during the APE.
8. Develop, maintain and communicate APE opportunities.

Preceptor

1. Provide technical and administrative oversight to the student throughout the Applied Practice Experience.
2. Sign the APE Proposal Form (an agreement between the preceptor/host site and MPH student).
3. Orient the student to the practice site, including policies and procedures.
4. Regularly schedule check-in meetings with the student and provide feedback and guidance.
5. Review and evaluate the student's progress at the end of the experience with the *Preceptor Evaluation* form.

CHECKOUT APPOINTMENT

Upon completion of the Applied Practice Experience, students are required to schedule a checkout appointment with the Office of Public Health Practice. Students will have an informal discussion about the practice experience and submit the final hard copy deliverables (Postscript Report, Preceptor Evaluation, supporting documents, and any other deliverable(s) produced for the practice site).

To schedule the checkout appointment, please contact christine.cortalano@mssm.edu.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

The Office of Public Health Practice is available to assist students throughout the Applied Practice Experience process. This includes providing general guidance, orienting students to the APE, advising on best practices for site identification, and review and approval of the proposal, postscript report and evaluation. The Office of Public Health Practice is located in the CAM Building, 5th Floor West, D5-141.

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Office hours: available on MARC, or by appointment

Step-by-Step Process for Completing the Applied Practice Experience

This timeline outlines the necessary steps to complete the APE requirement. Please refer to the Applied Practice Experience Guide for complete details.

- 1) Attend the Applied Practice Experience Information Session.
Students who are unable to attend a scheduled session can schedule a meeting with the Office of Public Health Practice.
- 2) Identify potential practice sites based on previous experience and future career goals.
The Office of Public Health Practice and Specialty Track Advisor will assist with identifying opportunities, a prospective site, and potential preceptor. The preceptor should be a public health practitioner, or an experienced professional in a closely related field. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to identify and secure a practice site.
- 3) Develop the APE Proposal.
Work closely with the preceptor to identify project roles and responsibilities, and discuss your proposed experience with your specialty track advisor.
 - a. Using the proposal outline provided, submit a draft of your proposal to the Office of Public Health Practice for review, and make any requested revisions.
 - b. Review the final proposal with your track advisor and preceptor for approval and signature (APE Proposal Form).
 - c. Submit the completed proposal and signed proposal form to the Office of Public Health Practice for approval *prior to the start of your APE*.
- 4) Register for the Applied Practice Experience.
If you matriculated in the Fall 2017 term or later, you will register for MPH0092 Applied Practice Experience- 3 credits. If you matriculated prior to Fall 2017, you will register for MPH0090 Practicum- 0 credits.

Register for the APE in the academic term in which your experience will begin. You might find that you intend to begin your APE in between registration periods. In this case, you should register for the APE in the next available registration period. The APE Proposal must be submitted and approved by the Office of Public Health Practice in order to complete your registration.

- 5) Complete the Applied Practice Experience.
A minimum of 150 hours is required. Students may, and often do, complete more than 150 hours.

- 6) Complete the APE Postscript Report.
This reflection paper is completed at the end of your APE.
 - a. Write your postscript report using the outline provided.
 - b. Submit your postscript report to your preceptor and track advisor (see Step 7)

- 7) Submit the APE Preceptor Evaluation
The Preceptor Evaluation is completed once the formal APE period has ended.
 - a. Have your preceptor complete the evaluation. Attach a copy of your postscript report.
 - b. Submit the completed evaluation with attached postscript report to your track advisor for signature.

- 8) Schedule a Checkout Appointment/Document Submission
Contact christine.cortalano@mssm.edu to schedule your checkout appointment. Prepare to participate in an informal discussion about the Applied Practice Experience and submit the final hard copy deliverables (Postscript Report, Preceptor Evaluation, supporting documents, and any other deliverable(s) produced for the practice site).

FAQs

When should I register for the Applied Practice Experience?

Register for the APE in the academic term in which your experience will begin. You might find that you intend to begin your APE in between registration periods. In this case, you should register for the APE during the next available registration period. The APE Proposal must be submitted and approved by the Office of Public Health Practice in order to complete your registration.

Which course code do I use for registration: MPH0090 or 0092?

If you matriculated in the Fall 2017 term or later, you will register for MPH0092 Applied Practice Experience- 3 credits. If you matriculated prior to Fall 2017, you will register for MPH0090 Practicum- 0 credits.

Can I complete my APE at my place of employment?

You may complete the APE at your place of employment as long as the activities are distinct in nature from your job description, extending beyond your work responsibilities. A preceptor must still agree to oversee the experience and the Office of Public Health Practice must approve the APE.

Can I complete my APE at the Icahn School of Medicine?

To be appropriate for applied practice activities, sites and/or projects situated within academic settings must be primarily focused on community engagement, typically with external partners. Students may not pair with ISMMS faculty members on individual research studies to complete the APE. If you are not sure if a particular site and/or project within ISMMS is appropriate for the APE, please contact the Office of Public Health Practice.

Can a paid experience count as my APE?

Yes. You are welcome to use a paid internship opportunity to fulfill the APE requirement.

What is the minimum page requirement for the proposal and postscript report?

The Proposal should be 3-4 pages in length. The Postscript Report should be 4-7 pages in length, not including supplemental documents.

For my APE, I am completing a program evaluation for the local health department. Will this also satisfy my Culminating Experience requirement?

No. We encourage students to use the APE as a foundation for the Culminating Experience, but the two projects are separate academic requirements.

I'm experiencing an issue with my preceptor/site. Who can I talk to about this?

If you are experiencing issues with your preceptor or site, please contact the Office of Public Health Practice. We will provide advisement on the best way to move forward, and mediate if necessary.

I'm applying for an internship and would like assistance with my resume/CV and other application materials. Where can I go for help?

The Office of Career Services and Strategy provides consultations for resume feedback and interview preparation. Please contact carol.johnson@mssm.edu to set up an appointment.

Students may also come to the Office of Public Health Practice for guidance.