



Icahn  
School of  
Medicine at  
**Mount  
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*Graduate School of  
Biomedical Sciences*

# GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PUBLIC HEALTH

GUIDE FOR THE APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE (APE)  
2024-2025



QUESTIONS? EMAIL [PUBLICHEALTH@mssm.edu](mailto:PUBLICHEALTH@mssm.edu)

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# APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

## Description

The Applied Practice Experience (APE) 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 and the settings must be primarily focused on community engagement, typically with external partners involving some level of community engagement. University health promotion or wellness centers may also be appropriate. The Applied Practice Experience enables students to achieve many of the competencies necessary to be successful public health practitioners.

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.

There are abundant opportunities for the student to meet the goals and objectives of this requirement. Applied practice experiences may involve governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial and for-profit settings, or appropriate university-affiliated settings. To be appropriate for applied practice experience activities, university-affiliated settings must be primarily focused on community engagement, typically with external partners. University health promotion or wellness centers may also be appropriate.

Students participate in a field-based experience (practicum or internship) for 150 hours or more, and complete two or more work products to satisfy the Applied Practice Experience. With approval, this requirement may be satisfied in other ways, such as through course-based activities, activities linked to service learning, or co-curricular activities. Please check with the Office of Public Health Practice for eligibility.

## Eligibility & Timing

Students are eligible to begin the Applied Practice Experience after completion of fifteen credits in the Program. Students must be in good academic standing in order to begin the APE.

Ideally, the Applied Practice Experience is 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.

## 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 Applied Practice Experience 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
- Friday Finds (weekly bulletin)
- Blackboard Resources (Potential Placement Sites; Public Health Internship Programs; Featured APE Opportunities)
- Handshake

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

A student employed in a public health setting may choose to submit a work product (developed by the student) that originates from their place of employment. Students must obtain approval from the Office of Public Health Practice.

### Completing the APE in an Academic Setting

To be appropriate for applied practice experience activities, university-affiliated settings must be primarily focused on community engagement, typically with external partners. Projects within an academic institution such as ISMMS, particularly within an academic department or faculty-supervised lab setting, would not be appropriate for the applied practice experience unless the projects involve engagement with a community partner or setting. Please contact the Office of Public Health Practice for questions on site and/or project eligibility.

## 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 may use this experience to fulfill the APE requirement. Students who choose this option are still required to adhere to all APE requirements in order to receive credit for the APE.

## A Foundation for the Culminating Experience

Often times, the Applied Practice Experience can serve as the basis for the Culminating Experience, completed in the second year of the Program. It is 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 your track advisor and the Office of Public Health Practice as you develop your plan. The APE and Culminating Experience are separate requirements for the MPH Degree. You should refer to the Culminating Experience Guide for more details.

## 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. Below is a list of the requirements. A description of each requirement is on p. 6 and 7. Please also refer to p.11, *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 and 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 of 150 hours at an approved practice site
- Completion of a minimum of two work products
- Attainment of at least 5 competencies
  - At least 3 competencies must be Foundational Competencies
- Submission of the APE Postscript Report: Submit work products
- Completion of Final Evaluation
  - Submission of the Preceptor Evaluation

- Submission of the Competency Assessment
- Participation in a Checkout Meeting with the Office of Public Health Practice

## Information Session

Students must attend an APE Information Session prior to initiating their APE. There are three sessions throughout the academic year ( Fall, Spring I & Spring II). Students who are unable to attend a scheduled session can schedule a meeting with the Office of Public Health Practice. Students should attend the session held in the term in which they matriculated in the Program.

## Proposal

All students are required to submit an Applied Practice Experience Proposal and a Proposal Form signed by the student, preceptor and track advisor. The Proposal Form serves as an agreement between the student, the preceptor, and the Program. The proposal is developed in consultation with your preceptor, and must be pre-approved by your track advisor and the Office of Public Health Practice prior to initiating the APE. Use the outline provided by the Program to complete your proposal. The proposal includes the following sections: Description of the Practice Site, Nature & Scope of the Project/Experience, Work Products & Competencies, Learning Objectives, Service Objectives, and Duration of Practice Experience. Submit a draft of your proposal to the Office of Public Health Practice for review. You may be asked to revise your proposal to meet the APE criteria... Please submit your final proposal and proposal form signed by your preceptor and track advisor 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 activities completed prior to obtaining approval by the Office of Public Health Practice will not count towards the APE.**

## Registration

Students must register for MPH0092 Applied Practice Experience- 3 credits for the term in which their APE is beginning. If the practice experience 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 Proposal Form).

## Work Products

Examples of suitable work products include project plans, grant proposals, training manuals or lesson plans, surveys, memos, videos, podcasts, presentations, spreadsheets, websites, photos (with accompanying explanatory text), or other digital artifacts of learning.

Reflection papers, contact hour logs, scholarly papers prepared to allow faculty to assess the experience, poster presentations, and other documents required for academic purposes may not be counted toward the minimum of two work products.

The materials may originate from multiple experiences (e.g., applied community-based courses and service-learning courses throughout the curriculum) or a single, intensive experience (e.g., an

internship requiring a significant time commitment with one site). While students may complete experiences as individuals or as groups in a structured experience, each student must present at least two products demonstrating individual competency attainment.

Combined degree students have opportunities to integrate and apply their learning from both degree programs through applied practice experiences.

## Competencies

Students must demonstrate attainment of five competencies through completion of the Applied Practice Experience. At least three of these competencies must be Foundational Competencies. Students may consult with their specialty track advisors to identify appropriate competencies. Competency attainment is assessed through the final work products. Foundational and Track-Specific Competencies can be found on [our website](#), in the Student Handbook, and on Blackboard.

## Postscript Report

Once you have completed your experience, you are ready to submit the Applied Practice Experience Postscript Report. 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.

## Final Evaluation

### Preceptor Evaluation

All students must be evaluated by their preceptor. Students are evaluated on their professionalism, performance, application of public health concepts, and competency attainment. 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.

### Competency Assessment

Specialty track advisors review the final work products to assess the extent to which the student has attained each competency. Students will receive a rating of ‘exceeded,’ ‘met,’ ‘met with commentary,’ or ‘unable to evaluate’ for each competency.

### Checkout Appointment

Students must schedule a checkout appointment with the Office of Public Health Practice to review their final work products, preceptor evaluation and competency assessment. Students will give a brief oral presentation about their practice experience, and will discuss how they achieved each competency through completion of their work products.

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

## SUBMISSION PROCESS

Students who are actively completing the Applied Practice Experience will be added to the Applied Practice Experience Organization on Blackboard. This will appear in the 'My Organizations' section. Students will submit their final documents (Postscript Report, Evaluation, and Work Products) electronically to the APE Organization. In addition, the Postscript Report and Evaluation are to be submitted in hard copy to the Office of Public Health Practice.

### Steps to completing the Final Evaluation

- Upload your Postscript Report and final Work Products to 'Final Postscript Report and Work Products' in the Applied Practice Experience Organization on Blackboard.
- Ask your preceptor to complete the evaluation. Provide him/her with a copy of your postscript report and work products.
- Submit your evaluation, completed by your preceptor, to your specialty track advisor for completion of your competency assessment. Your track advisors will have access to your postscript report and work products on Blackboard.

Note: When you contact your track advisor, let them know your work products and postscript report are available on Blackboard, and you are ready to have Part II of your evaluation completed. Your track advisor may request a meeting to review your evaluation.

- Upload your completed and signed evaluation to 'Completed Final Evaluations' in the Applied Practice Experience on Blackboard.
- Contact the Office of Public Health Practice to schedule an APE checkout meeting.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Student**

1. Attend an APE Information Session.
2. Identify and secure a site/project.
3. Develop the APE Proposal and obtain approval from 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 and submit all required deliverables (proposal, postscript report, work products, and evaluation) in a timely manner.
9. Schedule a checkout appointment with the Office of Public Health Practice.

## **Specialty Track Advisor**

1. Assist students with identifying potential sites and provide advice to students about site selection.
2. Provide guidance in the development of the proposal.
3. Review overall progress of the student during the APE, as needed.
4. Complete a competency assessment at the end of the APE.

## **Office of Public Health Practice**

1. Manage student field placements and maintain student portfolios.
2. Develop, maintain and communicate APE opportunities.
3. Orient students to the Applied Practice Experience.
4. Assist students with identifying potential sites and provide advice to students about site selection.
5. Review APE proposals for eligibility and approval, and provide feedback as necessary.
6. Send a confirmation email to the preceptor once the proposal is approved.
7. Assist the student and/or preceptor in resolving any issues that may arise during the APE.
8. Review and evaluate the postscript report, final evaluation and work products to ensure successful completion of the APE.
9. Conduct checkout appointments.

## **Preceptor**

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

## OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

The Office of Public Health Practice is available to support students throughout the Applied Practice Experience process. We offer advisement, orient students to the APE process, assist with identifying and developing APE opportunities, determine eligibility, review and approve proposals, and provide support to students and preceptors throughout the APE.

The Office of Public Health Practice is located in the Academic Program Office in the CAM Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor West.

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

- 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 sites/projects 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 your work products, 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.
- 5) Complete the Applied Practice Experience:
  - Completion of at least two work products
  - Attainment of at least five competencies (At least 3 foundational competencies)
  - Completion of a minimum 150 hours

- 6) Complete the APE Postscript Report using the outline provided.
- 7) Upload your work products and postscript report to 'Final Postscript Report and Work Products' in the Applied Practice Experience Organization on Blackboard.
- 8) Complete the Final Evaluation
  - a. Ask your preceptor to complete the evaluation. Provide him/her with a copy of your postscript report and work products.
  - b. Submit your evaluation, completed by your preceptor, to your specialty track advisor for completion of your competency assessment. Your track advisors will have access to your postscript report and work products on Blackboard.
- Note: When you contact your track advisor, let them know your work products and postscript report are available on Blackboard, and you are ready to have Part II of your evaluation completed. Your track advisor may request a meeting to review your evaluation.
- c. Upload your completed evaluation to 'Completed Final Evaluations' in the Applied Practice Experience Organization on Blackboard.

- 9) Contact the Office of Public Health Practice to schedule an APE checkout meeting.

## *FAQs*

### **When should I register for the Applied Practice Experience?**

Register for the APE in the academic term in which your experience will begin. If you are beginning your APE in between registration periods, 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.

### **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.

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

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

**How many competencies do I need to address for each work product?**

Students must attain at least five competencies (three of which must be foundational) throughout their Applied Practice Experience. Students demonstrate competency attainment through completion of their work products. A minimum of five competencies is required for completion of the APE (not five per work product).

**Can I complete all work products at the same practice site?**

Yes. Students are encouraged to complete all work products at the same practice site; in some cases, students may be approved to complete their work products at multiple sites. If you are collaborating with multiple sites to complete your APE, you will need to complete a proposal, postscript report and final evaluation for each site.

**My practice site will not permit me to share my work product because it contains sensitive information. What do I do?**

If appropriate, you can redact confidential information from your work product. If this is not an option for you, you may produce a summary report or poster describing your actions and processes in creating the work product. The report must be submitted to both the practice site and the Office of Public Health Practice.

**I am 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.