HED 590: PRACTICUM IN COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION  2015-2016

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Course Overview

HED 590 consists of three practical elements: an extended (400-hour) practical experience at a community agency with a strong public health focus; a capstone project carried out at that site and presented to faculty, classmates, and local preceptors at the close of Spring semester (via electronic media for those completing during Summer semester); and a comprehensive program and evaluation plan (CPEP), submitted to faculty for evaluation and remediation as needed early in the student’s final semester. Final grade for the course is comprised of these various elements.

There are no regular classes scheduled during the practicum, apart from Capstone Day, the Monday of Final Exams week, which is a required meeting. However, there are various milestones to be met by students and preceptors. In addition, MPH Coordinator meets at least once with each student, either in person or via Skype, and consults with the practicum preceptor several times re: progress and clarification of work products.

Work product guidelines, timelines for completion of activities, and various forms are supplied on the department’s website, and some are provided here, as well.

MPH students partner with a community health agency for experiences in health education. Particular emphasis is placed on the health educator’s areas of responsibility related to assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation, but is not limited to these areas (as outlined in Objectives, below). The practicum is a 400 contact hour (minimum) practical experience that offers the student an opportunity to practice skills gained in the classroom by working within an agency. This period of supervised work-training permits the student to acquire practical information, to test various approaches to assigned tasks, and to consolidate classroom knowledge with practical experiences.

An essential factor in guaranteeing a successful practicum is matching the interest of students with the mission and resources of the agency. Therefore, prior to the start of the practicum, students must: (a) thoroughly investigate the agency's mission, programs and resources to determine how well it will meet their career goals; (b) meet with SIUC’s MPH Coordinator to arrive at professional objectives for the practicum, based on the Health Educator’s Areas of Responsibilities, and personal developmental objectives; (c) have an agency agreement in place

In addition to professional preparation, the practicum is viewed as an aid in placing the student in a permanent professional position. By giving students the opportunity to perform under the observation of a practicing professional, they are able to build a set of references and work experiences required in applying for permanent jobs. To this end, students are encouraged to select practicum experiences in locations and with agencies where they would like to work. No university restrictions are placed on salaries, in kind payments, or location of approved sites to
permit maximum flexibility in agency selection. This period of supervised work-training permits the student to safely experiment and consolidate a set of professional skills needed to compete in the work force.

The specific purposes of the practicum experience for the student, the agency, and the university are:

- To broaden the student's concept of public health and provide experiences that will aid in the understanding of public health practice.

- To provide the student an opportunity to discover professional strengths and weaknesses, to learn practical skills, and to integrate these skills with their classroom skills so as to develop a set of professional approaches to job duties.

- To provide the student an opportunity to view a professional's individual management style, leadership skills, and professional philosophy.

- To provide the university with a work setting for evaluating student performance and professional preparedness.

- To offer the practicing professional an opportunity to cooperate in the education of new professionals, and to evaluate students for potential professional positions.

**Objectives associated with Professional Competencies**

Students should gain practical experience in as many of the professional Health Education competencies as possible including:

- Assessing individual and community needs for health education (NHEC 1)
- Planning health education strategies, intervention, and programs (NHEC 2)
- Implementing health education strategies, intervention, and programs (NHEC 3)
- Conducting evaluation and research related to health education (NHEC 4)
- Administering health education strategies, intervention, and programs (NHEC 5)
- Serving as a health education resource person (NHEC 6)
- Communicating and advocating for health and health education (NHEC 7)

In addition, by the conclusion of the practicum, students will be exposed to as many of the five core disciplines of public health as possible including:

- Epidemiology
- Environmental Health
- Biostatistics
- Health Services Administration
- Behavioral sciences/Health Education
Additional Learning Objectives

By completion of the practicum, students should:

- Develop an awareness of professional ethics and relations
- Develop a more clear understanding of the setting and career path personal preferences
- Improve writing and communication skills in a professional setting
- Learn more about career management through the process of setting practicum goals
- Develop a deeper appreciation for establishing and achieving short-term work goals
- Demonstrate proficiency by completing a major independent project. This project will allow the student a reasonable amount of autonomy in planning, implementing and evaluating a program.

Course Requirements

___ 1. Completion of all required MPH courses and maintain a 3.0 or higher grade point average
___ 2. Two interviews with the faculty advisor prior to commencement of the practicum (1st--semester early to discuss interests and potential sites, 2nd—to confirm site and goals).
___ 3. Signed agreement with the agency, preliminary practicum objectives, and preliminary personal practicum goals (brought to 2nd interview)
___ 4. Final practicum objectives and goals approved by faculty advisor by the first week of work
___ 5. Completion of at least 400-600 (6-9 credit) hours of work during the practicum
___ 6. Bi-weekly reports to the faculty advisor for all the time worked
___ 7. Mid-course evaluations by the student and the site supervisor
___ 8. Final evaluations by the student and the site supervisor
___ 9. Completion of a capstone presentation on student’s major independent project
___ 10. Satisfactory completion of a comprehensive program planning and evaluation document

Reporting procedures

Students will email their reports to the faculty advisor the Monday of every even numbered week. In your reports, you will answer five questions: 1) How have you spent your time (give approximate hours for each activity); 2) How have you been progressing toward your objectives; 3) How are you progressing toward your personal goals; 4) What new experiences have helped your professional development; 5) What are your specific work objectives for the next two weeks; 6) What questions, concerns or issues do you have?

The student is asked to review each report with his/her site supervisor before submitting it. The supervisor should be asked to approve the work objectives for the next two weeks. If the student prefers, the 6th question does not have to be shared with the site supervisor and can be addressed to the faculty advisor directly when needed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preceptor’s final evaluation (using assessment scale)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPH Coordinator’s evaluation*</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capstone Project and Presentation**</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive program and evaluation plan***</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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* The coordinator’s evaluation is based on semi-weekly reports and meeting(s) with student and preceptor. Quality of reports, including details and insight into the process will be important elements. Student’s timeliness, display of personal responsibility and self-direction re: carrying out course activities are also important factors here.

**Faculty evaluate students based on quality and sophistication of the primary project, as reflected in the student’s presentation. Student’s performance in this area is also reflected in the preceptor’s final evaluation.

*** The faculty regard the CPEP as a “pass-fail” activity. Because not all students will reach that benchmark with the initial submission, points have necessarily been attached to the process. A CPEP that requires no re-writes or remediation receives full credit. If rewrites are required, 10% - 20% of total credit will be subtracted (depending on extent of rewrites required and student’s responsiveness to request for rewrite. needs for rewrite). If other remediation is required, **70% of available credit must be achieved during remediation for student to pass for the semester, regardless of grades on other work products in HED 590, and the student will receive**