

**Applied Practice
Experience (GPH 743)
Manual**

Information and forms available at:
<http://success.une.edu/public-health/applied-practice-experience/>

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Applied Practice Experience Overview

The Applied Practice Experience (APE) is a required component of the Master of Public Health (MPH) program. The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) requires that “all graduate professional public health degree students develop skills in basic public health concepts and demonstrate the application of these concepts through a practice experience that is relevant to student’s areas of specialization.” As such, the APE is an opportunity for students to:

1. Integrate and apply knowledge and skills from coursework to a practical setting to strengthen public health competencies.
2. Work with experienced public health practitioners to create 2 high quality final products.

Students must complete an APE at a community-based practice site under the supervision of a preceptor with advanced knowledge and experience in the field of public health. The experience should address at least 5 competencies (at least 3 of which must be foundational), and lead to the creation of products that are useful to the host organization.

Credit Hours and Prerequisites

GPH 743 is a 3-credit course that spans the entire semester (16 weeks). Students will be enrolled in Blackboard, and course assignments must be submitted via the Blackboard assignment portal. All required courses must be completed before registering for the APE.

Waivers

The applied practice experience is an integral part of the Master of Public Health program and required for graduation; therefore no waivers will be granted.

Registration

All required pre-course paperwork must be completed before the student will be eligible to register. The course is restricted by the Registrar’s office, and that restriction can only be overridden after the student has been cleared to register.

Practicum Coordinators

The Practicum Coordinators can be reached at tbalogun@une.edu and mciolfi@une.edu

Applied Practice Experience Policies

Beginning the APE before Core and Required Coursework is completed

Students will not be allowed to start the applied practice experience before passing all core and required courses. There will be no opportunity to petition.

Practice Experience Hours/Deliverables

There is no minimum number of hours required, but the student must create at least 2 final products that are useful to the host organization. These products are pre-determined before the APE begins.

Place of Employment

Students may complete their projects at their place of employment if:

1. The practice experience project is different from regular work.
2. Work hours are not counted towards the practice experience.
3. The project is in a different department with a different supervisor.

Financial Compensation

Students may receive a fellowship or merit-based stipend for the Applied Practice Experience work.

Preceptors' Credentials

The preceptors should have:

1. An MPH or higher (similar degrees to MPH may be considered).
2. A bachelor's degree with 5+ years of public health experience.

Complying with the Site's Regulation

Students must comply with all the regulations established by the sites, including any immunization requirements. Speak with your preceptor prior to your start date to ensure compliance.

The Integrative Learning Experience

The Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) is a written requirement that demonstrates synthesis of foundational competencies. Students are expected to produce high quality written reports that could be either one of:

1. Program evaluation
2. Research paper (quantitative/qualitative)
3. Policy analysis/evaluation

The ILE course (GPH 744) is a 1-credit course taken over 16 weeks during the student's final semester in the program and only applies to students who take the APE.

Completing the Applied Practice Experience with the Integrative Learning Experience

Students may choose to wait until their final semester in the program to complete the APE. At that time it is expected that they would have completed all coursework including electives, therefore they can complete both the APE and ILE in the same final 16-week semester of the program. Keep in mind that in this situation, planning for the ILE will start before the planning for the APE.

Planning Your Practice Experience

In order to begin the practice experience, students must have:

- Completed all required courses
- A site and a qualified preceptor approved by the UNE Practicum Coordinator
- A well-defined project
- Identified at least 2 high quality final products
- A fully-executed affiliation agreement between UNE and the site
- Submitted both course-specific forms:
 - o [Preceptor and site pre-approval form](#)
 - o [Applied Practice Experience Learning Contract](#)

Whereas students are responsible for finding their APE sites, the Practicum Coordinators are available for assistance during this process.

Suggested Planning Timeline



Planning Steps

Step 1: Find a Site

At least six months before the practice experience begins, students should reach out to potential public health sites in their communities and start applying. An updated resume and cover letter describing their interests, skill sets, a brief description of the requirements (final products, a defined preceptor, etc.), and the types of opportunities desired (unpaid, evening hours, etc.) should be created.

Tips for Applying:

- Have a colleague or a career service professional look over your resume and cover letter.
- Local job postings are a good resource to identify potential sites. Although students may not be looking for a full-time job, job postings can help identify public health organizations in your area.
- Many agencies post internship/volunteer opportunities on their websites.
- Although e-mail is a good way to make an initial inquiry/contact, seek out opportunities to meet potential preceptors in person (e.g. requesting informational interviews, attending and volunteering at outreach events/seminars).
- Keep a spreadsheet to keep track of organizations you have contacted.
- When meeting with potential preceptors, discuss interests and career goals, while being open and flexible to learn more about the organization and available projects.
- Always be courteous and professional.

Step 2: Identify a Potential APE Project

Before completing the required courses, students should start thinking about the applied practice experience they want to complete. Keep in mind that the APE should be a meaningful experience with authentic student participation within a team of public health professionals. It is also an opportunity for students to explore potential employment agencies upon graduation.

Students may work in a variety of public health agencies that fit their skill sets and career goals. Potential sites include community-based organizations or clinics, local and state health departments, or schools. Hospitals

can serve as APE sites if the project will involve healthcare management, emergency preparedness or quality improvement. Universities and research centers can only be approved if they are based in the community and the project does not involve clinical work such as direct patient care.

In general, a practical experience entails one or more of the following roles:

- Assessing, monitoring or analyzing data to ensure equity and quality of public health services
- Planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating public health interventions
- Developing disease prevention and health promotion, media advocacy, or risk communication materials
- Developing, implementing, and evaluating public health laws, regulations, and policies
- Participating in administrative or management activities, which could include quality improvement, organizational analysis, or strategic planning
- Supporting the development and goals of public health coalitions through community organizing and advocacy efforts, needs assessments, strategic and participatory community planning
- Participating in the development and/or execution of applied public health research, including translational, evaluation, and epidemiological research efforts that contribute to the evidence-base and efficacy of public health practice

The Practicum Coordinators are available to assist with identification of potential sites and projects in your area. A list of places at which students have completed their work can be found online at:

<http://cgps.une.edu/assets/public-health/practicum/MPH-Practicum-Site-Information.pdf>

The following questions may be helpful in identifying a project:

- a. What skills would I like to develop/enhance? (e.g. quantitative skills, communication and facilitation skills)
- b. What strengths and expertise would I bring to the organization?
- c. Which type of setting would I like to explore? (e.g., a state health department or a small community-based organization, working domestically or abroad).
- d. How much flexibility would I need to complete a project? (i.e. consider whether your schedule and availability would be compatible with those of the organization)

Step 3: Complete Paperwork

At least three months before the practice experience begins, students should start filling out the necessary paperwork. The following documents, all of which should be returned to the Practicum Coordinator via email or DocuSign are required:

1. An [Affiliation Agreement](#) between UNE and the site (return by email only)
2. [APE Site and Preceptor Pre-approval Information form](#)
3. [Applied Practice Experience Learning Contract](#)

1. *Affiliation Agreement – Must be finalized before students begin the practice experience*

This is a legal document between UNE and the practice experience site. The UNE template can be downloaded from the webpage (<http://cgps.une.edu/assets/public-health/UNE-MPH-Non-Clinical-Affiliation%20Agreement.pdf>) and sent to the site for review. The site may suggest edits or modifications using “track changes” for the UNE legal department to review and sign. If the site wishes to use its own template, send the document to the Practicum Coordinator for review and submission to UNE. UNE will work with the site to develop a fully executed agreement. The affiliation agreement must be in place before students start their field hours. Depending on the changes needed, this process can take 1 to 6 months to complete.

2. *APE Site and Preceptor Information Pre-approval Form – Due 3 weeks before class begins*

This form is designed to collect information about the site and the preceptor. The student completes the first half of the form, routes it to the Practicum Coordinator for approval, and then the preceptor signs off on the form. A fully signed copy is sent to the student and preceptor.

3. *Applied Practice Experience Learning Contract – Due 3 weeks before class begins*

This form is designed for the student and preceptor to discuss the project in more details and agree on the expectations, tasks, outcomes and timelines. It is recommended that students meet with their preceptor before completing the form.

Tips for filling out the Applied Practice Experience Learning Contract:

- The Deliverables/Products are the items that the student will create for the site by the end of the practice experience. There should be a minimum of 2 products.
- The tasks are the specific activities that would lead to the creation of the final products.
- The competencies demonstrated are the public health skills that would be acquired by the carrying out the listed tasks, and the creation of the final products. The competencies are listed on the last page of the APE learning contract – a minimum of 5 is required for the entire experience (not 5 competencies per product).
- An example of the completed table is on the next page.

Example of aligned Competencies, Tasks and Final Products

	Competency	Tasks/Activities	Final Products
1	FC #3: Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Export survey data from Survey Monkey to STATA for analysis. 2. Perform data analysis under supervision of preceptor. 3. Generate graphs and tables using Microsoft Excel. 	Scientific Poster to be presented at the APHA 2020 conference in Philadelphia.
2	FC #4: Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write a summary report of the analyses conducted. 2. Use the information from the report to create a high quality poster. 	
3	FC #11: Select methods to evaluate public health programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilize the PRECEDE-PROCEDE model to evaluate the success of the 'It's Your Game' program. 2. Complete each step of the PRECEDE-PROCEDE model. 	Evaluation report for the It's Your Game program.
4	PC #2: Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify peer-reviewed resources and generate a report on appropriate methods for evaluating health promotion programs. 	
5	PC #4: Evaluate the use of financial resources and management techniques by public health programs to achieve goals and sustainability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate how the program utilized the funding received in 2019/2020 FY. 	

*FC = Foundational competency

* PC = Program competency

Overview of GPH743 Assignments

- Blackboard Discussions (~ every 2 weeks)
- Reflection assignments (~ every 2 weeks)
- Progress report (Midway through the practice experience)
- A 5-page Final Report and preceptor evaluation
- A proposed Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) topic for GPH 744
- A one-page synopsis of the practice experience

Roles and Responsibilities

Student

The student is expected to function as a professional at all times and is responsible for completing all activities and deliverables agreed to in the *Applied Practice Experience Learning Contract*.

The student is also expected to:

- ✓ Contact the Practicum Coordinator at least six months before the project start date to start the planning process
- ✓ Commit to identifying potential sites in a timely manner, and follow up as needed
- ✓ Ensure that all required paperwork is in place before the practice experience begins
- ✓ Produce high quality deliverables
- ✓ Comply with the policies and procedures of the host organization including any immunization and health insurance requirements
- ✓ Maintain regular communication with the preceptor and course instructor
- ✓ Complete the required course assignments on time

Preceptor

The preceptor should be familiar with the student's project and have appropriate credentials (MPH or higher, other similar degrees or 5+ years of public health experience). During the practice experience, the preceptor reviews and signs the student's progress report and completes an evaluation of the student's performance at the end of the course. The link to the online evaluation will be sent to the preceptor by email.

The role of the preceptor is to:

- ✓ Clarify expectations for students' work
- ✓ Ensure that students are adequately introduced to the site, colleagues and project
- ✓ Ensure the student assists the organization with appropriately challenging and substantive projects
- ✓ Oversee the student's activities and provide feedback as needed
- ✓ Provide mentoring and exposure to different parts of the organization
- ✓ Communicate with UNE Practicum Coordinator as needed
- ✓ Review and sign the student's progress report

- ✓ Provide a final evaluation of the student's work

-----**End of Manual. Forms to Follow**-----

Practice Experience Forms

These are samples of the APE forms that will serve as a guide for when you complete the form by DocuSign. Hard copy forms can be downloaded at:

<http://success.une.edu/public-health/applied-practice-experience/>

and returned to the Practicum Coordinator

Preceptor and Site Information Approval Form

SECTION 1 (Pre-approval)

(To be completed by the student.)

Student Name: Semester:

Practical Experience Site:

Full site address:

Preceptor Name: Degree:

Preceptor Title: Email:

1. Provide a brief description of the site including its mission, services, and/or programs. Include a link to the website if possible.
2. Describe the types of practical public health/population-based experience that a student may have when placed at this site. List any specific potential projects a student may complete (if known).
3. If preceptor does not have an advanced public health degree, list their qualifications to oversee a student, including education and training, experience with students in the past, and public health expertise and experience.

Student signature:

Practicum Coordinator signature:

Comments:



Applied Practice Experience Learning Contract

(To be completed by the student with guidance from the preceptor)

Due: Three weeks prior to the 1st day of class

Student Name:

Semester:

Practice Experience Site:

Preceptor Name:

Project Title:

Section 1: Overview of your project(s)

Briefly describe your project(s) including purpose and expected outcomes. (~200 words)

Section 2. Competencies, Tasks and Final Products

(See the APE manual for an example)

For your practice experience you should create a minimum of two high quality products that are useful to the host organization, and address at least five competencies; three of which must be foundational. List the competencies for the Applied Practice Experience, the tasks that will lead to the creation of the final products, and the final products you will create.

	Competency	Tasks/Activities	Final Products
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Section 3: Competencies and Signature

(At the end of the practice experience, *you and your preceptor will be asked to rate how well you were able to meet at least five competencies*)

UNE GPPH Program Competencies

1. Synthesize and incorporate scientific evidence into professional writing
2. Search databases and critically analyze peer reviewed literature
3. Develop strategies for qualitative and quantitative data management.
4. Evaluate the use of financial resources and management techniques by public health programs to achieve goals and sustainability.
5. Evaluate the use of technological applications in health interventions

Council for Education in Public Health (CEPH) Foundational Competencies

Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health

1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice

Public Health & Health Care Systems

5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels

Planning & Management to Promote Health

7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs

Policy in Public Health

12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes
14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity

Leadership

16. Apply principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges

Communication

18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content

Interprofessional Practice

21. Perform effectively on interprofessional^ teams

Systems Thinking

22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

Student signature:

Date:

I have read and approved the project described above.

Additional Comments by preceptor (optional):

Preceptor Signature:

Date:

Practicum Coordinator:

Date:



APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE PROGRESS REPORT FORM

To be completed by the Student and signed by the Preceptor

Each student should plan to meet with their preceptor about midway through the practice experience to review the progress made, and to plan future activities. This form should be completed by the student, reviewed and hand-signed by the preceptor, and submitted on blackboard as an assignment.

Student Name:

Preceptor Name:

Applied Practice Experience Site:

1. Describe and explain any changes to the project, tasks, or final products. If there are no changes indicate N/A.

2. Describe in detail the progress made toward completing each of the five competencies. Use the table to list specific competencies, activities and tasks completed so far. List any products developed or in progress.

	Competency	Tasks/activities currently underway to meet the competency	High quality Final Product to be created upon completion of tasks/activities
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Preceptor comments and signature

I attest that the student is on track to complete at least 2 high quality products for our site and meet the competencies listed above.

Name _____

Signature/Date_____



APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE FINAL REPORT FORM

To be completed by the student

Student Name:

Preceptor Name:

Applied Practice Experience Site:

Address:

Dates of Practical Experience:

Total # of Products Completed:

Section I – Competencies

You listed 5 competencies in your Applied Practice Experience Learning Contract. Using the table below, list the tasks/activities in which you participated during your APE that helped you achieve those competencies. List the final products you created to align with the competencies and tasks.

	Competency	Tasks	Final Product
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Section II – Written Report

Write a written report about your Applied Practice Experience. This report is limited to 5 double-spaced pages and should follow the structure outlined below.

Guidelines for the Written Report:

- I. **Introduction:** Describe your Practical Experience. Who were the people that you interacted with during your experience? Give some background on the importance of the project(s) you worked on to public health and to your host agency.
- II. **Competency Attainment:** Provide a detailed description of **how** you attained each one of the 5 competencies; and any challenges you might have encountered in the process.
- III. **Lessons Learned:** Describe the best thing that happened during the experience: something that someone said or did; an insight gained or goal accomplished. How did your classroom experiences help you with completing your tasks? Describe the lessons learned. What surprised you (positive and negative)? In what ways has this experience changed how you think about public health issues and public health practice? What insights did you gain that might assist you in your career?