

## **Office of Public Health Practice: Practicum Fact Sheet for Field Supervisors**

### **What is a Master of Public Health practicum?**

A public health practicum is a professional work experience for public health graduate students. As in all accredited graduate schools of public health, MPH students at BUSPH are required to complete an approved, planned and supervised practicum at a site where they can apply their public health training.

### **How can a practicum student help my organization?**

A BUSPH student will bring a variety of skills and experiences to your organization, which can be tailored to your organization's needs and the student's academic and professional goals. For example, a student may contribute expertise in data collection, management and analysis, healthcare quality improvement and operations, program assessment, program development, implementation and evaluation, clinical and academic research, policy development and research, among others. (See reverse page)

### **What is the goal of the practicum for students?**

The practicum provides an opportunity for BUSPH students to integrate and apply their public health coursework in a "real world" environment. The experience allows students to learn from professionals in the field and ultimately develop practical skills and personal confidence as a public health practitioner. For students new to the field of public health, the practicum serves as an important first step in their career. For students with prior work experience, the practicum provides the opportunity to hone and share their skills or gain a new area of expertise.

### **What types of projects are appropriate for a practicum?**

Most importantly, a public health practicum must provide a challenging professional experience for a master's level student. A position involving mainly clerical support would not qualify as an appropriate practicum. Practicum experiences can be **paid or unpaid**, and usually are completed within the timeframe of one academic semester, although they can be extended.

### **What is expected of me as a Field Supervisor?**

Every practicum student must have a designated "Field Supervisor" who will be responsible for overseeing the student's activities and participating in midpoint and final assessments of the student's work. Students will require a desk and access to a computer and office supplies. Students will also be assigned a faculty practicum advisor from their academic department to assist in the planning and approval process. (See reverse page)

### **Are students required to present their practicum projects?**

At the end of the semester, students present their practicum experiences in the form of a poster or oral presentation to BUSPH faculty, peers, and staff as well as BUSPH's community partners. Field Supervisors are also invited (but not required) to attend the poster session at the end of the semester.

### **For more information, please contact:**

Laura R. Rabin, Practicum Manager  
Tel: (617) 638-4994 \* Fax: (617) 638-4966  
Email: [Irrabin@bu.edu](mailto:Irrabin@bu.edu)

## **Practicum Requirements at a Glance**

### **Learning Contract**

At the start of the practicum, the student and supervisor will meet to complete the *Learning Contract* by discussing the scope of work, timeline, deliverables, and expectations for the practicum project, which will also be reviewed by the faculty advisor.

### **Midpoint Review**

At the midpoint of the practicum, the student and supervisor will review his/her progress and reassess the *Learning Contract* if necessary. The student will record the outcome of this meeting in his/her *Midpoint Review*.

### **Student Poster Session**

At the end of the semester, the student will present a poster highlighting his/her practicum experience to peers, faculty and other members of the public health community. Supervisors are encouraged (but not required) to attend the *Poster Session*.

### **Final Evaluation**

At the completion of the practicum, supervisors are asked to complete a *Final Evaluation* of the student's work and discuss their comments with the student.

### **BUSPH offers the following academic concentrations:**

- Biostatistics
- Environmental Health
- Epidemiology
- Health Law, Bioethics & Human Rights
- Health Policy & Management
- International Health
- Maternal & Child Health
- Social & Behavioral Sciences

### **Students may offer the following professional skills (partial list):**

- SAS, data collection, data management
- Health promotion, education & training
- Healthcare administration, operations, quality improvement & patient safety
- Marketing, communications, website development
- Policy research & analysis
- Program development, implementation & evaluation
- Academic and clinical research
- Assessment & survey tool development
- International experience