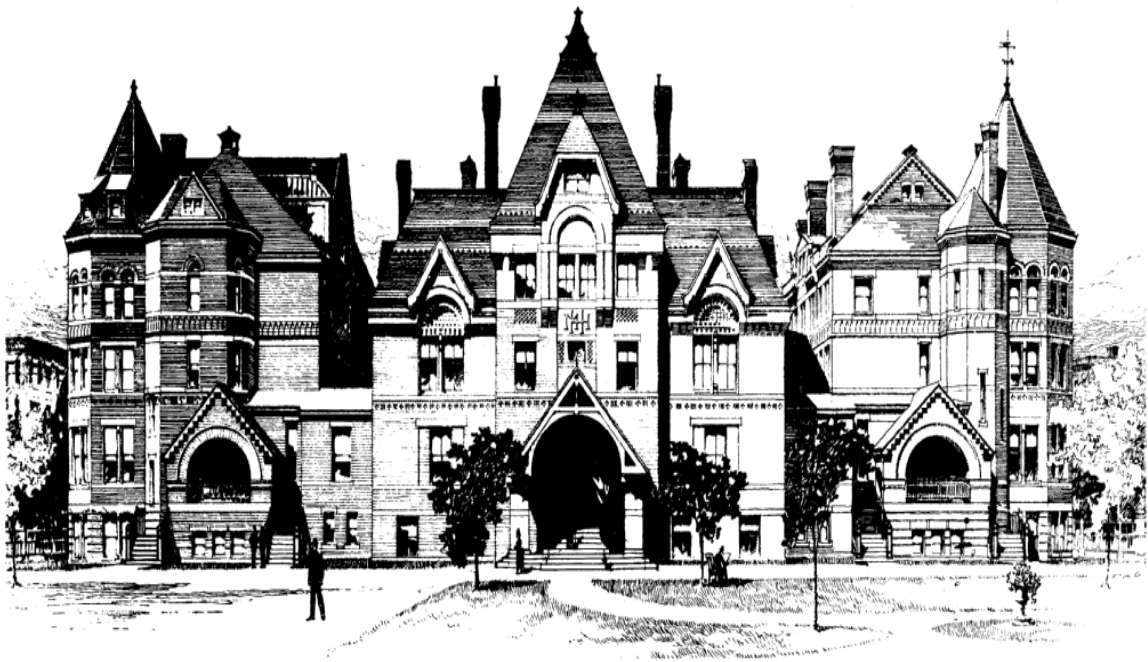


Boston University School of Public Health

# Student Practicum Handbook

## 2014-2015



Boston University School of Public Health

Office of Public Health Practice  
Talbot Building, 229/232 East  
715 Albany Street  
Boston, MA 02118

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**TO: MPH Students**

**FROM: Harold Cox, MSSW  
Associate Dean for Practice**

Welcome to Boston University School of Public Health! The MPH curriculum has a required practicum that will give you first hand experience in a field setting. This practicum will allow you to work alongside public health professionals who solve real world problems every day. The placement also will allow you to practice the skills you learn in the classroom. I hope you will take full advantage of this important learning component to become a knowledgeable and competent public health professional. My best to you in your MPH program.

This *Student Practicum Handbook* has been prepared to assist you in finding, conducting and completing a meaningful practicum experience that meets the academic standards of the School of Public Health. Guidelines and academic requirements are described in detail.

Both the *Practice Office Website*, <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/practiceoffice>, and the *Blackboard* site, <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/practicum/blackboard>, contain additional information about the required practicum, forms that appear in this handbook, and a database of potential placement sites.

We wish you success in your practicum; our office is ready to assist you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold Cox". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "H" and "C".

## General Information

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The public health practicum is a required element of the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree at the Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH). As in all accredited schools of public health, MPH students are required to complete an approved, planned, and supervised practicum. The Office of Public Health Practice supplies the academic and administrative framework for the required practicum.

A practicum is a BUSPH course that provides the opportunity to integrate and apply classroom learning in a public health work environment, enabling students to observe and learn from professionals in the field. With appropriate supervision, students contribute to a community's resources and to the solution of public health problems, while developing practical skills and personal confidence as public health professionals.

The practicum is to be scheduled when best suited to meet student and participating organization's needs. Financial compensation for a practicum, if available, is a matter to be negotiated between the student and the sponsoring organization. In most cases, because of the brief duration and nature of a practicum, the practicum is unpaid.

### Prerequisites

- Students may begin a practicum after successfully completing a *minimum* of 12 BUSPH credits.
- A practicum site and project must be approved by the student's Departmental Faculty Practice Representative prior to registration and the practicum start date.

### Course Options

Students may fulfill the MPH practicum requirement by completing the assignments associated with one of the following course options:

Course	Credits	Minimum # Practicum Work Hours	Grade
<i>For students who matriculate Fall '09 and after:</i>			
PH970	0	112 hours	pass/fail
PH975	1-4	112 hours (regardless of # credits)	pass/fail
PH984	4	112 hours	letter grade
PH971 or PH970 (MSW/MPH students)	0 or 1	2 <sup>nd</sup> year MSW field placement	pass/fail
<i>Alternatives that fulfill practicum requirement:</i>			
Peace Corps MI Program	0-5	complete Peace Corps training	letter grade
Kenya Program (IH707)	6	complete course	letter grade
Program for International Health Practicum in the Philippines IH 708 & IH709	6	complete courses	letter grade
All students must also complete <b>two (2) Professional Development Seminars</b> , regardless of the practicum course option that they choose.			

## Overview – Elements of the Practicum Course

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Below are the required steps (listed chronologically) that all students must complete in order to establish and complete a practicum:

### 1. Selection and Registration

- Identify a practicum site and Field Supervisor.
- Meet with your *Departmental Faculty Practice Representative (DFPR)* to discuss practicum.
- Submit *Practicum Approval Form* via the *Practiceweb*
- After faculty approval, register for practicum by completing a paper Practicum Registration Form with the Practice Office.

### 2. Learning Contract:

- Meet with Field Supervisor to discuss and develop your *Learning Contract* including the Scope of Work and timeline.
- Meet with DFPR to discuss Learning Contract details. Submit Learning Contract information online via the Practiceweb.
- Submit to the Practice Office a hardcopy of Learning Contract signed by the field supervisor within two weeks of practicum start date. Timeline is accelerated for international practicums.

### 3. Midpoint Review

- Halfway through practicum, meet with Field Supervisor to discuss practicum progress.
- Complete *Midpoint Review Form* via the Practiceweb and make any necessary updates to the Scope of Work and timeline.
- Submit to the Practice Office a hardcopy signed by the field supervisor within a week of completion.

### 4. Abstract

- Electronically submit an *Abstract* of practicum work to the Practice Office prior to the Practicum Finale at: <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/practicum/abstract>
- Due dates for abstracts - Fall Semester: November 18, 2014 / Spring Semester: April 7, 2015

### 5. Poster/Poster Session

- Develop practicum poster and submit it to the Practice Office prior to the day of poster session.
- Optional: Attend the Practice Office's "How to Make a Poster," workshop that will be held within two weeks of the poster submission deadline.
- Attend *Practicum Finale* to exhibit poster and attend your *Departmental Integration Seminar*.
- Practicum Finale Dates - Fall Semester: December 3, 2014 / Spring Semester: April 23, 2015

### 6. Evaluations

- Submit completed *Student Evaluation of Practicum* and *Field Supervisor Evaluation of Practicum Student* online via Practiceweb to the Practice Office.

### 7. Professional Development Skill-Based Learning Experiences

- Proof of attendance for two (2) Professional Development Seminars

# Course Requirements

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## PH970 and PH975 Course Requirements

The Practicum course requirements are:

- Placement in a local, state, federal, or international agency or organization that addresses significant public health problems, with support from a designated Field Supervisor
- Departmental Faculty Practice Representative (DFPR) approval of practicum
- Approved Learning Contract signed by Field Supervisor and DFPR (due 2 weeks after the practicum start date for local placements, due on or before start date for international placements, or those less than 1 month in duration )
- Completion of the Midpoint Review (online, via the PracticeWeb)
- Submission of the practicum Abstract <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/practicum/abstract>
- Completion of the minimum practicum work hours (see chart on page 3) and activities as determined in the learning contract/midpoint review
- Practicum Finale:
  1. *Poster Presentation* - presentation and submission of poster at practicum finale event
  2. *Departmental Integration Seminar* – held prior to the poster session
- Two-part evaluation:
  1. *Field Supervisor Evaluation of Practicum Student* (online, via the PracticeWeb)
  2. *Student Evaluation of Practicum* (online, via the PracticeWeb)
- Participation in two (2) professional development skill-based learning experiences.

## PH984 Course Requirements

PH984 is a 4-credit directed practicum option. This course is available for students who will produce an enhanced academic product suitable for publication or presentation upon completion of the practicum. In order to choose this option, the student must identify a BUSPH faculty member with whom to work (“SPH Faculty Preceptor”). This faculty member will oversee the practicum in place of the Departmental Faculty Practice Representative. Expectations and guidelines for the product must be discussed with the Faculty Preceptor at the onset of the practicum. The student must demonstrate the capacity to complete such a project, and complete it within a reasonable timeframe. The faculty member should commit to such a project only if he/she is willing to co-author with the student on the practicum product.

*In order to register for PH984, students must submit a written justification for taking the course to Scott Harris, Practicum Director, with a description of the project and name of BUSPH Faculty Preceptor.*

Once approval has been given from both the Practice Office and SPH Faculty Preceptor, registration will be permitted. The faculty member is expected to meet with the student several times throughout the practicum to monitor student progress. PH984 is a letter graded course (determined by the Faculty Preceptor). Course requirements are the same as PH975 with the addition of the enhanced academic product.

## MSW/MPH Students (PH971/PH970)

MSW/MPH students may complete the traditional practicum required of MPH students. Alternatively, they may meet the SPH practicum requirement by completing their second year MSW field experience in conjunction with the **PH971/PH970 Practice Seminar course**. This course has been designed to promote

the integration of social work and public health fields. Students choosing this option must complete 12 credits at the School of Public Health before enrolling in PH971. Students must contact the Practice Office in order to register for PH971; online registration is not available.

As part of the PH971/PH970 Practice Seminar course, students must engage in activities aimed to build an understanding of the population-based perspective of public health and its relevance to the social work profession:

1. *PH971/PH970 Practice Seminar course*. In this two-hour seminar, students meet to discuss the role of the public health social worker with other dual degree students. Case studies are used to assist this learning. **And...**
2. *Professional Development seminars*: Participate in two seminars from the following list:
  - a. “How To... Workshops” offered by the Practice Office designed to complement the academic training of the MPH students: [link](#)
  - b. Professional seminars of student’s choice that will help in the professional development of either a public health and/or social work professional. The seminar must be pre-approved by the Practice Office.

### **MD/MPH Students (PH970)**

MD/MPH students may fulfill their practicum requirement in the traditional manner, as outlined in this manual. However, others may fulfill the requirement by undertaking a suitable project with a one-month elective rotation during their fourth year of medical school. This elective should be planned well in advance, and should be devoted entirely to a public health-related project that has been approved by the MD/MPH Program Director (Dr. Don Thea, [dthea@bu.edu](mailto:dthea@bu.edu)).

Students who choose this option are encouraged to discuss possible practicum projects with Dr. LaMorte, who must approve the proposed practicum and will serve as the practicum field supervisor. Regardless of which option is chosen, MD/MPH students must fulfill all standard practicum course requirements outlined in this manual (see page 3).

### **Professional Development Skills-Based Learning Experiences**

All students are required to participate in two professional development skills-based learning experiences (e.g., seminars, workshops, classes) as part of the practicum course. Students can seek professional development learning experiences at BUSPH (such as the “How To... Workshops” series offered monthly by the Practice Office), other academic centers, professional meetings, or other professional venues. Participation in these learning opportunities may be at any time during students’ MPH experience; however, the practicum will not be complete (i.e., there will be a final grade of “incomplete”) until they are completed.

Appropriate learning experiences must:

- Focus on *skills* in any of a variety of arenas, e.g., management, communications and advocacy; planning and strategy; project management; research skills.
- Address at least two specific skills
- Total at least two hours (minimum of 1 hour per skill addressed)
- Be pre-approved by the Practice Office, with the exception of the [Practice Office How To... Workshops](#) sessions or other sessions listed by the Practice Office as “pre-approved”. See the [Practicum Blackboard site](#) for more details.
- Attendance at the learning experiences must be verified.

# Practicum Roles and Responsibilities

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## ➤ **Academic Advisor**

Students are strongly encouraged to meet with their assigned academic advisor in their first semester of matriculation. It is important to discuss the practicum graduation requirement. Keeping in mind that a minimum of 12 credits must first be completed, practicum course options and the most appropriate semester to enroll should be considered. Based on the student's interests, the academic advisor may suggest that the student meet with other BUSPH faculty with expertise in the student's area of interest.

## ➤ **Departmental Faculty Practice Representative (DFPR)**

Each academic concentration has a designated faculty member (or members), the Departmental Faculty Practice Representatives (DFPR), who work with students throughout their practicum. The DFPR must approve the proposed practicum prior to the practicum start date. The Representative will also meet with students to provide feedback and approve the Learning Contract. The DFPR may monitor student progress throughout practicum, communicate any need for intervention to the Practice Office, provide feedback and approve the practicum abstract, help in the development of the Departmental Integration Seminar, and/or serve as a resource for the development of poster content for the student Practicum Poster Session. A list of the DFPRs for each department can be found on pages 30-31.

## ➤ **Faculty Preceptor (PH984)**

The Faculty Preceptor is a SPH faculty member who agrees to work with a student completing PH984. The Preceptor has the same responsibilities as a Departmental Faculty Practice Representative (listed above). In addition, the Preceptor will work collaboratively with the student in production of the enhanced academic product. Finally, the SPH Faculty Preceptor will provide a letter grade for the student's practicum upon completion and submit it to the Practice Office.

## ➤ **Field Supervisor**

The Field Supervisor is the person at the practicum site who agrees to mentor the student and oversee the work. This person should have expertise in assigned project areas, experience, status within the organization, and the ability and desire to supervise and mentor. The Field Supervisor shares organizational values and experiences with the student to enhance the student's placement. The Field Supervisor and other agency personnel assist the student by providing access to resources such as workspace and supplies.

The Practice Office will send an information packet to the Field Supervisor with practicum requirements, roles, and forms once a practicum has been approved. The Field Supervisor discusses and approves the Learning Contract at the beginning of the practicum, and also provides the student with an orientation to the organization and specific projects.

The agency orientation may include:

- Description of the organizational mission and vision
- Introduction to key people within the organization
- Informational meetings with management
- Organizational policies and procedures



- Provision of appropriate workspace for the student

After the Learning Contract has been developed, the Field Supervisor is required to participate in two additional (in-person) formal meetings with the student at the midpoint and at the end of the practicum:

1. The Midpoint Review, initiated by the student, assesses practicum progress in relation to the goals set forth in the Learning Contract. If either the student or Field Supervisor indicates that follow-up from the Practice Office is needed, the Practice Office will contact the Field Supervisor via phone or email.
2. The Field Supervisor Evaluation of Practicum Student is conducted towards the end of the practicum. The supervisor will review the evaluation with the student before submitting it to the Practice Office online.

The Field Supervisor is also given the opportunity to review and comment on the student poster prior to the Practicum Finale. All Field Supervisors are invited to attend the practicum poster session during the semester(s) in which their student(s) attend.

Field Supervisors who would like information about the practicum program should contact the Practicum Director (Scott Harris, [scotth@bu.edu](mailto:scotth@bu.edu)). There are additional resources for field supervisors available online at: <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/requiredpracticum>

## ➤ **Student**

### A. On-Site Responsibilities

The student is expected to function as a professional at all times and is responsible for all activities and work described in their Learning Contract. The student is also expected to:

- Participate in the design and implementation of the practicum
- Provide professional, high-quality work
- Comply with the policies and procedures of the organization
- Integrate within the structure of the organization
- Maintain communication with the Field Supervisor, Departmental Faculty Practice Representative, and Practice Office throughout their practicum

### B. Academic Responsibilities

As an academic course, the practicum has requirements that must be completed in order to receive a passing grade. If course requirements are not met (e.g., practicum documentation is either missing or not submitted in a timely manner or on-site responsibilities are not met), students may be in jeopardy of failing the course and therefore NOT meeting the graduation requirement. See the Course Information section on page 4, for a full list of practicum requirements.

## ➤ **Practicum Director and Program Manager**

The Practicum Director and Program Manager are Practice Office staff members who will assist in identifying appropriate practicum sites, and provide guidance to students throughout their practicum experience. They are responsible for registering practicum students, and communicating with the Field Supervisor. They will also follow-up with the organization if warranted by comments in the Midpoint

Review Form. The Practicum Director and Program Manager are available by phone or e-mail to answer questions or to assist in the resolution of any problems.

*Practicum Director*  
Scott Harris  
scotth@bu.edu

*Program Manager*  
Katie Boss  
keboss@bu.edu

➤ **Assistant Dean for Public Health Practice**

The Assistant Dean for Public Health Practice is the academic resource for students, Departmental Faculty Practice Representatives, agency representatives, and Practice Office staff. She assures quality and consistency of practicum content, Learning Contracts, the integration seminars, and the student poster presentations. The Assistant Dean troubleshoots problems as communicated via DFPRs, Practice Office staff, and/or students. She also provides students with ongoing support for developing of the practicum abstract and poster presentation. She is responsible for the “How To...Workshops” series, and provides approval for seminars selected by students to meet the professional development requirement of the practicum.

*Assistant Dean for Public Health Practice*  
Dr. Anne Fidler  
Afidler@bu.edu

# How to Find and Register for a Practicum

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## Planning

Arranging for a practicum represents a mix of student, faculty, and staff-initiated activities. After meeting with the academic advisor, students should determine when the practicum best fits into their academic plan. *It is ultimately the student's responsibility to secure a practicum position.* Students can initiate their practicum search in various ways: through personal and/or professional contacts, faculty recommendations, or opportunities posted with the Practice Office.

Practicum placements can occur at community-based organizations, local, national, and international sites. In addition, faculty members in each department have professional and collegial relationships with many public health practitioners. If a student needs further assistance in locating a practicum site, he/she may contact the Practice Office.

The most extensive list of opportunities can be found on the Practice Office website at <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/practicum>. Information about new opportunities is sent to students regularly through the Practice Office listserv. Samples of these opportunities are also posted to the Student Insider as part of the "Thursday Practice Update". These communications are intended to assist in the search for a practicum; however, students may also need to seek out other options.

## Choosing a Practicum

1. Student meets with academic advisor to plan his/her academic program.
2. Decisions about the choice of the practicum and the number of credits should be made by students to fit their own individual academic and professional needs. *It is strongly recommended that these decisions be made in consultation with the departmental academic advisor.*
  - \* Students participating in an HPM Department educational track (health policy or health care management) are required to complete a practicum with the track focus. Additional approval of the practicum is needed by the student's academic advisor. See the *Department of Health Policy and Management MPH Concentrator's Guide* for more information.
  - \* Students enrolled in the MBA/MPH Dual Degree Program need to check with their BUSPH program director on how to fulfill the practicum requirement.
3. Student decides which semester to register for practicum (must first complete 12 BUSPH credits).

## Registering for the Practicum

1. Student secures a placement at an organization.
2. Student meets with the Departmental Faculty Practice Representative (DFPR) for practicum approval. The student must complete the *Practicum Approval* form online via the Practiceweb. See pages 30-31 for a list of representatives from each academic concentration.
3. Once the online approval form is submitted, the student will receive an email from the Practicum Director, giving them permission to come to the Practice Office to register for the course. ***All students must formally register for the practicum*** – no hours or work completed prior to registration will count toward the practicum requirements.
4. Student goes to the Practice Office and completes a paper Practicum Registration Form (online registration is not available for the practicum). All students must register for the practicum in the semester in which it starts. This is the same policy that applies to any other class taken at Boston University.

## **BMC and International Placement Policies**

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### BUSPH and Boston Medical Center (BMC) Practicum Policy

In an effort to ensure the safety of everyone involved, BUSPH and Boston Medical Center have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding student practicum work at BMC. Upon securing a practicum within BMC and prior to the actual start date, the student must be prepared to provide the following to human resources at BMC:

1. Proof of health insurance
2. A current immunization record
3. Allow BMC or BU to conduct a CORI check

The Practice Office will set up the appointment with human resources at BMC. The student must make every effort to keep this appointment. While the MOU has been in place for a while, all BMC employees may not be aware of it; though it is our responsibility to ensure that the protocol is followed.

### International Practicum Policy

Students completing their practicum out of the country have additional requirements that have been developed with the IH Field Practice Office to help ensure a safe and well-planned international experience. Students interested in completing their practicum internationally must consider the risks, challenges, rules, and cultures that are different than those encountered in the United States. To this end, IH concentrators as well as any student completing their practicum internationally are required to:

1. Complete the IH Practicum Orientation prior to starting the practicum.  
<http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/culturalawareness/>
2. Sign and submit a waiver:  
See the [Practicum Blackboard site](#) under Course Information

# Student Practicum Assignments

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## **Learning Contract**

The Learning Contract provides the foundation for the practicum. Its purpose is to establish, at the beginning of the practicum, the activities, deliverables, and timeline, which are agreed upon by the student, field supervisor, and the Departmental Faculty Practice Representative.

The Scope of Work forms the basis of the Learning Contract. It requires that the student understands what activities are expected in order to produce the desired product(s) and when. Clearly defined deliverables are the foundation of a strong and successful practicum. The methods, activities, and timeline should then describe the detail of the student's work and how the deliverables will be obtained.

In preparation for developing the Learning Contract, the student should meet with the Field Supervisor to understand the goals and proposed activities of the practicum. The student must then meet with the Departmental Faculty Practice Representative for final approval. The approved Learning Contract is due to the Practice Office no later than two weeks after the practicum start date. Timeline for submitting the Learning Contract is accelerated for students doing international practicums or those lasting less than one month. For students doing international practicums or those lasting less than one month, the Learning Contract must be submitted prior to the start date.

### **Contract Components:**

1. The *Learning Contract form* (page 19)
2. *Practicum narrative* - title/position of practicum, background description of the practicum site and project: 1-2 paragraphs.
3. *Scope of Work* (page 22) – deliverables, activities, and timeline.

An example is available on the Practicum Blackboard site:

<http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/practicum/blackboard>

## **Midpoint Review**

The Midpoint Review, which should occur about halfway through the practicum, is a time for reflection and feedback. The goal of the Midpoint Review is to help ensure that the practicum is on track in providing a valuable learning experience for the student, and that the student is making a meaningful contribution to the organization. It can help identify and troubleshoot any unforeseen challenges or barriers while ensuring that the student is progressing with the scope of work. Finally, it provides an opportunity to make any necessary updates to the Learning Contract (including the Scope of Work and timeline).

The student must complete the Midpoint Review Form via the Practiceweb and review it with the Field Supervisor using the Learning Contract as a point of reference. Both the student and agency supervisor are given the opportunity to seek follow-up from the Practice Office. The student is responsible for delivering a copy of the document signed by the field supervisor to the Practice Office within a week of the Midpoint Review.

## **Abstract Guidelines**

Prior to preparing the practicum poster, students must submit a practicum abstract to the Practice Office. Students enter the abstract, which is a brief overview of the practicum, into the Practice Office database in order to share student work with others. The Practice Office will publish the abstracts of all students participating in the Practicum Finale at the end of each semester. A student who does not want his/her abstract published in that document must notify the Practice Office. However, in all cases, an abstract is required.

In general, an abstract should tell the reader these five things: 1) What you did; 2) Why you did it; 3) How you did it; 4) What you found; and 5) What it means.

For the purpose of this assignment, the abstract must include these three parts:

1. *Introduction:* Briefly state the public health problem addressed by your practicum. Describe the purpose and scope of the practicum.
2. *Methods:* What activities were completed? How were the activities relevant to the program?
3. *Results/Projected Outcomes:* Present the outcomes or projected outcomes of the project. Briefly describe the impact of practicum work on broader activities of the agency and population served.

The abstract must be concise, containing no more than 250 words. Students should write only what is essential to convey the information. Yet, it is also important to be descriptive; active verbs should be used, while avoiding the passive voice.

\*It is the student's responsibility to review the abstract with his/her Departmental Faculty Practice Representative (DFPR) before submitting the final version online.

**The abstract must be written using the exact format as the examples provided on the Practicum Blackboard site, <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/practicum/blackboard>, under Assignments.**

The abstract should be completed shortly after the midpoint review is due (a couple of weeks before the Practicum Finale). Students must submit the final version of the abstract electronically at <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/practicum/abstract> to be eligible to attend the Practicum Finale at the end of the semester. See Overview on page 3 for due dates.

Upon submission of the abstract online to the Practice Office, a copy will automatically be sent to the DFPR.

Questions about writing the abstract? Students should first contact their DFPR. Additionally, Dr. Anne Fidler is also available at [afidler@bu.edu](mailto:afidler@bu.edu) / 617-638-4647.

## **Poster Presentation**

The purpose of the Poster Presentation is to enable students to summarize their practicum experience, and report on it to a wide audience in a meaningful way. The poster presentation was chosen as the end product for all practicums for several reasons:

1. A poster requires students to assess their experience critically and to place it in a relevant context for a scientific or other professional/business audience. It is a format that can be adapted to all types of practicums;

2. An overview of the practicums can be made accessible to a large audience (of students, faculty, agency personnel);
3. Thinking about the analytical/scientific content of the poster at the onset of the practicum will help the student design and conduct a practicum that will be less observational and more analytical and hands-on;
4. Students, whose practicum is not research-oriented or amenable to a scientific format, may present their project in the format of a “business/professional” poster. Such posters may be useful for a variety of purposes, e.g., to describe innovative programs, educate or entice constituents, or promote an issue.
5. At some time in their professional careers, virtually all BUSPH graduates will be required to prepare a poster and participate in a poster session at a professional meeting. This is a good opportunity to learn this skill and participate in a poster session attended by one’s peers and colleagues.

*Students placed outside the Boston area who are unable to attend a Practicum Finale must complete the following requirements:*

1. Submit the poster or poster slides to the Practice Office or attend the following semester’s poster session.
2. In lieu of the Integration Seminar, submit a 2-3 page summary to Scott Harris, Practicum Director, describing practicum challenges, impact of practicum on professional development, relevancy of practicum to SPH coursework, and how what was learned relates to the departmental concentration.

## **Guidelines for Posters**

Practicum students should begin to think about the nature, focus, and content of the poster early in the practicum. Taking into account the end product in advance can help focus the practicum learning objectives and activities. Students should discuss the development of the poster with the Departmental Faculty Practice Representative throughout the practicum. Students should inform their field supervisors about the poster, and provide an opportunity to review and comment on the content and format of the poster prior to the practicum finale.

The following guidelines are offered to help create an excellent poster that will enhance the learning experience.

### *Poster materials:*

- Please use a **tri-fold poster board, 36” X 48”** (about \$8.00 at Office Depot, Staples). However, if the student is creating a poster for the practicum agency that requires a different format (e.g., professionally done large poster print), that may be used; a separate poster will not have to be completed for the BUSPH poster presentation.
- PowerPoint can be used to create the images for the poster. However, do not simply tack up a series of PowerPoint slides, with bulleted text. Photographs and/or other graphics should be included to make the poster visually appealing and interesting.
- Optional: Students may wish to have a hard copy of any products generated and/or “props” that will help to convey the message of the poster.

### *Poster Content:*

The poster should contain the following information:

- Title
- Student name and academic department

- Introduction/Background, including:
  - 1) Name, location, brief description of organization
  - 2) Objectives and goals (These may reflect the specific practicum or overall project work, depending on the nature of the poster).
  - 3) Description of population served or program participants
- Practicum activities and rationale, including strategies employed to complete work (Again, the activities should focus on work done by the student, but may include a description of how the student's activities fit into a larger project.)
- Results, outcomes (for practicums that are not research-oriented, the results may focus on key findings, lessons learned). If the student's project is not complete at the time of the poster presentation, provide preliminary or anticipated results.
- Discussion of meaning or context of findings
- Recommendations and insights about how the work could be advanced or what should be done with the findings to improve the health of the public
- Federal agencies and private foundations have rules about how one must acknowledge funding received. If you worked on such a project (even if you did not receive any funding yourself), please include language such as:  
 "This poster presentation was made possible by (or supported by) Grant Number \_ (xxx) \_ from \_\_\_ (e.g., NIH, CDC)."  
**AND**  
 "Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the [name of awarding office or NIH]."

*Poster Style:*

No matter how wonderful the practicum experience and how brilliant the poster content, people will only learn from it if the material is presented effectively. ***A poster is a visual medium.*** The design should get the *main* points across easily, and to attract colleagues and engage them in conversation. There will be many posters on display during the poster session. Students should think about how others will take notice and be drawn to their own. The poster should tell a story, making points clear and simple with a logical flow.

Here is an excellent resource on creating an effective poster, from the Practice Office:

<http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/lphi/effectiveposters/story.html>

And here are a few detailed guidelines available on the web:

<http://www.ce.umn.edu/~smith/supplements/poster/guide.htm>

<http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/NewSite/>

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm>

The overarching themes of all of these (and other sets of guidelines) are:

- **Organization:** Use headings to help readers find what they are looking for (practicum setting, objective, results, conclusions, etc). Most suggest a columnar format: top to bottom, left to right. Use pleasing and balanced arrangement of graphics, text, colors.
- **Less is more:** Keep the verbiage to a minimum. Do not simply tack up pages of text. Some suggest a *maximum* of 50-75 words of text on a page. All text should be in fonts large enough to be read from 3-6 feet away (minimum font size: 18 pt). Title should be in larger font sizes to be read from far away. Use simple fonts (e.g., Arial, Helvetica) and not use more than 2 types.
- **Colors:** Dark colors on a light background are easiest to read. Use a theme of 2-3 colors; avoid overly bright (neon) colors.



- **Graphics:** Use graphics (simple charts, tables, graphs) and photos as appropriate. Remember: a picture can be worth a thousand words. Not only do they help tell the story, they also help attract the audience.

### **Oral Description**

Students must be prepared to present a brief (1-2 minutes) summary of the poster for the viewing audience. Many people, rather than asking specific questions, may simply say, “So, tell me about your poster.” Students should be prepared to say something brief and brilliant! Generate a short description of the project, with one or two sentences about each of these:

- What was done
- What was learned (project or study results)
- The public health implications and/or applications of the project

It is not easy to distill a complex experience into a very short description. Many students say that 1-2 minutes is simply not enough time to tell someone about their poster. If someone is interested in the topic or project, they will engage in questions, and there will be plenty of time to tell them about the practicum. Students should take the time to write down the presentation and practice it before the poster session. If it is too long, shorten it.

### **Help with Poster Preparation**

- Students should discuss the nature, focus, and content of the poster with the Departmental Faculty Practice Representative, as early in the practicum as possible.
- If help is needed or students would like to discuss ideas for the poster at any time throughout the practicum, contact Dr. Anne Fidler, Assistant Dean for Public Health Practice (617-638-4647 or [afidler@bu.edu](mailto:afidler@bu.edu) ).
- Posters of high quality from previous semesters are available in the Practice Office will be on display in the Talbot building as the poster presentation day nears.
- The Practice Office will hold one seminar each semester to assist students in preparing their posters.

### **Poster Grading**

Posters will be graded by the Departmental Practice Faculty member. Dr. Fidler, from the Practice Office, will review the posters and grades to assure consistency across departments. Because the practicum course is generally pass/fail, the posters will be graded in the same manner. If a poster does not meet the minimum requirements listed above, students may be asked to do revisions.

## Practicum Evaluation & Grading

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Two evaluations (Student Evaluation of Practicum, p.25 and Field Supervisor Evaluation of Practicum Student, p.28) must be submitted to the Practice Office upon completion of the practicum. These evaluations enable students to reflect upon their work and to assist the Public Health Practice Office in providing quality placement sites for future students. The Field Supervisor must complete the *Field Supervisor Evaluation of Practicum Student* and review it with the student. Both approvals are required prior to submission. The *Student Evaluation of Practicum* should be completed after the practicum finale and the end of the practicum.

The student's final grade is based on satisfactory completion of all practicum requirements. Students in PH984 will receive a letter grade from their SPH Faculty Preceptor. All others in PH970, PH971, & PH975 will be assigned a pass/fail grade by the Assistant Dean for Practice.

# Practicum Approval Form

## Boston University School of Public Health

### Instructions for Student & Departmental Practice Faculty Representative:

- Student – Prior to registration, please complete and set up a time to meet with Departmental Practice Faculty Representative for practicum approval
- Departmental Practice Faculty Representative – discuss student's proposed practicum and sign this form if approved
- Submit Online at: <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/practicum/practiceweb/student/studentwelcome.aspx>

\*\*\*\*\*

### Student Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ BU ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Concentration: \_\_\_\_\_ Pharma? Y/N (circle one) Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Practicum Information

Practicum Site (agency name, department, division, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address and Building / Room

Street Address

City State Zip / Postal Code Country

Field Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated practicum start date: \_\_\_\_\_ End date: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated practicum work hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

### Course Registration Information

Fall \_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

PH970 \_\_\_\_ PH975 \_\_\_\_ credits 1,2,3,or 4 PH984 \_\_\_\_

### Faculty Approval

Departmental Practice Faculty Representative:

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

# Practicum Learning Contract

Boston University School of Public Health

## Instructions:

- Complete ALL INFORMATION on both sides of this form and attach the project description, approved Scope of Work, and timeline. Student, Field Supervisor, and appropriate BUSPH faculty signatures are required.
- Submit the completed contract to the Practice Office within two weeks of the practicum start date. Keep one copy for yourself.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Student Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ BU ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Concentration: \_\_\_\_\_

## Course Information

Course #: PH 970 \_\_\_\_ PH975 \_\_\_\_ # of credits \_\_\_\_ PH984 \_\_\_\_

Semester: Fall \_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_

Practicum Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Practicum End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Practicum Work hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Midpoint Review with Field Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Faculty Information

Departmental Faculty Practice Representative: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

SPH Faculty Preceptor (PH984 only): \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

## Practicum Site Information

Practicum Site (agency name, department, division, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Practicum Site Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Field Supervisor Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Practicum Content

**Please include the following information on a separate sheet of paper and attach to this form:**

**1. Title/Position** of student's practicum and a **background** description of the practicum site and project: 1-2 paragraphs.

**2. Complete the Scope of Work following the example provided online (Practice Office website and Blackboard site under Assignments):**

- **Projected Deliverables/Outcomes:** List the products that you will help produce during your practicum (e.g., reports, data-sets, presentations, brochures, curriculum, etc.)
  - ❖ If there are no other deliverables obvious at the outset of your practicum, leave blank. Deliverables or outcomes that are identified during the practicum can be added to the Scope of Work at the Mid-point Review.
- **Activities:** List the various activities that you will engage in for each phase of your practicum (as they relate to the deliverable).
- **Timeline:** For each activity, list a general period (weeks and or months) during which the activity will be completed.

## Professional Responsibility

The practicum experience is intended to provide students with an opportunity to learn professional responsibility as well as public health skills. To facilitate this, it is important for the field supervisor to have a discussion with the student to clarify expectations and educate the student about rules, regulations, and policies that govern the activities that they will be performing on behalf of their host agency. We recognize that a discussion on these issues should best take place early on in the placement as students may not have sufficient experience to anticipate what issues need to be addressed or how best to initiate the discussion. The questions below are intended to facilitate that discussion and to ensure that matters that often arise in the context of public health placements are addressed.

The questions below should be completed by the agency supervisor and discussed with the student.

### Human Subject Research:

Yes    No

\_\_\_    \_\_\_    Does the project entail *research*\* involving human subjects and/or use of identifiable data?

#### ***IF YES:***

\_\_\_    \_\_\_    Has the project been reviewed and approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board?

\* "Research" means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to *generalizable knowledge*. Not everything that involves contact with people is considered research. For example, interviewing participants of an intervention program conducted by the agency in order to evaluate and improve the program would not be considered research unless the results were going to be used to be generalizable to other programs or agencies.

**Access to and Use of Data:**

Yes    No

\_\_\_    \_\_\_

Will student generate data for the host agency/organization or use data supplied by the host agency/organization?

**IF YES:**

\_\_\_    \_\_\_

Does the practicum supervisor have authority to grant student use of data?

\_\_\_    \_\_\_

May the student take the data offsite from the agency/organization?

\_\_\_    \_\_\_

Will the student be allowed to report the data or the results of their analysis as part of their final practicum product (poster or oral presentation)?

Please specify any additional confidentiality issues that the student should be aware of:

Please specify any additional data restrictions and authorship restrictions/arrangements:

## Practicum Course Requirements

***In conjunction with the Field Supervisor and the Departmental Faculty Practice Representative the student is responsible for:***

- **Learning Contract:** approved, signed and submitted
- **Midpoint Review:** reviewed, signed and submitted
- **Abstract:** reviewed with faculty rep. prior to submission
- **Practicum poster:** presented at the practicum finale
- **Practicum work hours:** completed practicum tasks and required hours
- **Student and Field Supervisor Evaluation Forms:** reviewed, signed and submitted
- **2 Professional Development Skill-Based Seminars** - matriculating fall 2009 students & after

## Signatures

***I have read the Learning Contract as prepared by the student and understand my role and responsibilities with regards to the successful completion of this practicum.***

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Field Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Departmental Faculty Practice Representative / SPH Faculty Preceptor:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
**Learning Contract: Scope of Work**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Practicum Site**

Projected Deliverables/ Outcomes *	Activities	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date

\* Some practicums may not have specific deliverables that are obvious at the outset. In such cases, leave blank and go on to list of activities. Deliverables that are identified during the progression of the practicum can be added to the Scope of Work at the midpoint review.

# Midpoint Review

## Boston University School of Public Health

The Midpoint Review should occur about halfway through the practicum and is a time for reflection and feedback. The goal of the Midpoint Review is to help ensure that the practicum is on track in providing a valuable learning experience for the student, and that the student is making a contribution to the organization. In addition, it can help troubleshoot any unforeseen challenges or barriers while ensuring that the student is progressing with the Learning Contract. Finally, it provides an opportunity to make any necessary updates to the Learning Contract (especially the Scope of Work and timeline).

**Instructions:** The **student** must:

1. **Complete the Midpoint Review Form** with the Field Supervisor using the Learning Contract as a point of reference.
2. **Update the Scope of Work** (activities, timeline and/or products) with any actual or foreseen changes.
3. **Submit** via the Practiceweb. Provide a copy signed by the Field supervisor to the Practice Office within 2 days of completing the Midpoint Review.

**Student Name (Print):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Concentration:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**1. Describe what you have accomplished to date. Include a list of activities.**

**2. Discuss the progress on accomplishing the proposed the scope of work activities and deliverables as described in the Learning Contract.**

(continued on back)



**3. Describe any challenges or obstacles encountered that have affected the progress of the practicum.**

**What is being done to address these obstacles?**

**4. Based on the amount of time left in the practicum describe any changes that need to be made to the Learning Contract?**

**5. Please describe any other issues that need to be addressed.**

**6. Is follow-up from the Practice Office needed with the Field Supervisor?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Signatures**

Field Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Return to BUSPH Practice Office, 715 Albany Street, T-E229/E232 Boston, MA 02118 - fax: 617.638.4966)

# Student Practicum Evaluation

## Boston University School of Public Health

**Instructions:**

This evaluation must be completed by the student at the end of the practicum, and submitted to the Practice Office (via the PracticeWeb) prior to receiving a final grade. This information will be used as part of an annual review of the practicum program.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept: \_\_\_\_\_

Practicum Site Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**How did you select your practicum site?**

Practice Office Postings \_\_\_\_\_

BUSPH Faculty Referral \_\_\_\_\_

Referral from a past BUSPH practicum student \_\_\_\_\_

Referral from a colleague \_\_\_\_\_

Contacted agency on your own \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**How many practicum work hours did you actually work (knowing that the required minimum is 112 hours)?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation of Practicum Site**

	Exceeded Needs	Met Needs	Somewhat Met Needs	Did Not Meet Needs	N/A
Orientation Provided by Agency					
Workspace/Facilities					
Access to Resources provided by the Agency					
Staff Qualifications & Experience					
Interaction with Staff					
Workload					

Comments?

**Would you recommend your practicum site to other students?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**If you would not recommend this to another student, please specify why:**

### Evaluation of Field Supervisor

	Exceeded Needs	Met Needs	Somewhat Met Needs	Did Not Meet Needs	N/A
Access to Field Supervisor (in person, email, phone, etc.)					
Level of Guidance/Mentorship from Field Supervisor					
Professional Feedback and/or Suggestions from Field Supervisor					
Knowledge level of Field Supervisor					

	More than once a week	Once a week	Every other week	Once a month	Less than once a month	Never
How often did you meet with your Field Supervisor (in person)?						

Comments?

### Evaluation of Dept. Faculty Practice Representative/SPH Faculty Preceptor

	Exceeded Needs	Met Needs	Somewhat Met Needs	Did Not Meet Needs	N/A
Access to faculty					
Level of Guidance/Mentorship from faculty					
Professional Feedback and/or Suggestions from faculty					

Comments?

### Evaluation of the Practice Office

	Exceeded Needs	Met Needs	Somewhat Met Needs	Did Not Meet Needs	N/A
Access to Staff/Faculty					
Level of Guidance from Staff/Faculty					

Comments?

## Evaluation of the Practicum Course

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Finding a practicum was easy				
The Learning Contract was essential in clarifying my deliverables, activities, and timeline.				
The Midpoint Review was a useful tool in evaluating my progress with my field supervisor.				
The Poster Session was a valuable use of time in sharing my practicum experience with the BUSPH community.				
The Integration Seminar was useful in reflecting on my experience and relating it to my overall BUSPH education and concentration				
The Practiceweb was useful in facilitating the submission of course forms.				
The skills-based seminars or online workshops were beneficial to me.				
The practicum increased my ability to work in and understand public health.				

Comments?

**Any other comments/concerns that you would like to share?**

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Field Supervisor Evaluation of Practicum Student

**Boston University School of Public Health**

This form evaluates the student's performance throughout the practicum experience.

**Instructions:**

- The Field Supervisor should complete this form at the end of the practicum.
- Please review this with the student before submitting the completed evaluation to the Practice Office.

**Field Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Agency/Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Start/End Date of Practicum:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**How many practicum work hours did the student complete?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please evaluate the student's performance throughout the practicum.**

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	N/A
Attendance/Punctuality				
Cooperation/Teamwork				
Problem Solving				
Dependability				
Professionalism				
Initiative/Motivation				
Adaptability/Flexibility				
Ability to Accept Feedback				
Communication Skills				
Cultural Competency				
Basic Public Health Skills				
Policy Development				
Program Planning				
Leadership Skills				

**Did the student successfully complete the Scope of Work as outlined in the Learning Contract?**

**What are the strengths of the student as a public health professional?**

**What recommendations for professional development do you have for the student?**

**Do you feel that the total hours designated for the student's practicum were sufficient in meeting your agency's needs?**

**Any other recommendations/comments/concerns?**

**Is your agency interested in working with future BUSPH Practicum students? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_**

- If yes, please send position descriptions to Katie Boss at keboss@bu.edu.
- The best time to recruit BUSPH Practicum Students is before each academic semester.

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Best Recruitment</b>
Fall	July-September
Spring	November-January
Summer	April-June

**Signatures**

**Field Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Practice Office:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY PRACTICE REPRESENTATIVES

### Biostatistics

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### Environmental Health

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### Epidemiology

*Students in Epidemiology should seek their Academic Advisor for practicum site approval and sign-off on the Learning Contract*

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## Health Law, Bioethics, & Human Rights

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## Health Policy and Management

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## Global Health

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Jim Wolff MD, MPH  
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## Maternal and Child Health

*Students in Maternal and Child Health should seek their Academic Advisor or other MCH faculty of significance for practicum site approval and sign-off on the Learning Contract.*

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Trish Elliott, DrPH, MPH  
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Lois McCloskey, DrPH, MPH  
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## Social and Behavioral Sciences

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**Dual Concentrators** should choose the Departmental Faculty Practice Representative from the department more pertinent to the practicum work.

\*MCH dual concentrators completing their practicum outside of MCH must also have an MCH Departmental Faculty Practice Representative co-sign on the Learning Contract.



## Practice Office – Practicum Staff Contact Information

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