

Practicum Handbook for Students



Career & Practicum Office
School of Public Health
Boston University



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SECTION I: PRACTICUM OVERVIEW

The Practicum is a hands-on field experience that is critical to success in your public health career. You must complete at least 240 hours at a local, national, or international public health-related organization. When thinking about securing your Practicum, think about Practicum opportunities that will “fill your gaps”. Practicums can be strategic opportunities to help you become more marketable in your MPH job search or for advancement in your current organization. Think about the job you would like to hold post-MPH, and look at job descriptions. If you see you are missing knowledge and skills that are in demand, look to fill these “gaps” in your Practicum.

The Career & Practicum Office (CPO) has dedicated Practicum staff. To set up an appointment, please contact sphpract@bu.edu.

SECTION II: IDENTIFYING YOUR PRACTICUM AND TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION

1. [Practicum Search: Step-by-Step Guide](http://www.bu.edu/sph/students/Practicum/finding-your-Practicum-2/Practicum-search-how-to-begin/) (<http://www.bu.edu/sph/students/Practicum/finding-your-Practicum-2/Practicum-search-how-to-begin/>)
 - a) [Complete Practicum Plan Template](#). Review our Practicum Plan Template to get started (see Appendix). This will get your juices flowing to think about your career interests and the types of skills you would like to hone; 2) develop strategies for how to successfully market yourself to Practicum sites; and 3) create a concrete Practicum search plan.
 - b) [Review Certificate-Based Career Paths Guide](#). This is a comprehensive guide to help you understand and identify career paths that align with your interests and passions. It will also help you to fine-tune your Practicum search plan. This guide is available on our Practicum website: <http://www.bu.edu/sph/students/Practicum/>
 - c) [Attend a Practicum Workshop](#). This will help answer your questions related to finding your Practicum, understanding Practicum requirements including the approval process, how to register, and what to expect during the Practicum experience. Please check SPH Handshake for upcoming workshops (under Events).
 - d) [Read through our Past Practicum Database and Practicum Abstract Books from previous semesters](#). These resources are available on our website and provide Practicum descriptions broken down by concentration/certificate areas.
 - e) [Meet with a CPO Practicum Advisor](#). Schedule a meeting to discuss your interests and brainstorm potential target organizations. Contact sphpract@bu.edu.

2. SPH Handshake Practicum Postings

SPH Handshake is the FIRST place to look for Practicum (and internship) postings. SPH Handshake also allows you to view jobs, upload and update resumes, enable your resume to be viewed by employers through resume books, and lots more. Please log on, build your profile, upload a resume, and explore your customized opportunities. Visit: <http://www.bu.edu/sph/careers/for-students/handshake/>.

We encourage students to complete their SPH Handshake profiles with rich, career-related details. This will customize the information SPH Handshake pushes to your home page: Practicums, internships, jobs, workshops and events, and other resources, all based on your interests.

Please note: your profile also affects how employers view your Practicum, internship and job applications. **“Complete”** SPH Handshake profiles are grouped into the *Fully Qualified* applicant pool. **“Incomplete”** profiles are grouped into the *Not Fully Qualified* pool. SPH Handshake needs enough information to verify that you check all the boxes on the employer’s qualifications list.

3. External Job and Internship Boards

External job boards often post internship positions. You may accept an “internship” as long as it meets the Practicum requirements. Great job boards include:

- [Public Health Employment Connection](#)
- [Idealist.org](#)
- [Indeed.com](#)
- [Internsearch.com](#)
- [Internships.com](#)
- [AcademyHealth.org](#)
- [Mass Life Sciences Center – Internship Challenge](#)
- [ISPOR](#) (Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research)
- [Propel Careers](#)

4. Creating Your Own Practicum

Many students “create their own Practicum” by asking former Practicum Supervisors, alumni and other networks if they have needs for a Practicum student. Note: Before reaching out to any contacts, be prepared to answer the following questions:

a) **What would you like to do in your Practicum?** Think about the [Learning Competencies](#) you would like to gain as well as possible [Deliverables](#) you would like to complete. See detailed descriptions in Appendix.

b) **What is your availability?**

- When are you available, both start and end dates (approximately)?
- How many and what hours are you available for? Will you need flexibility?
- Do you have access to transportation?
- Will you need to do some work remotely?

c) **Do you need to be compensated?**

Do you have to be paid? If you are asking for a Practicum to be created for you, some organizations may not have the budget to pay you. It is case-by-case, but it’s good to have a sense of what your needs are before you “make the ask”. A good way to ask about compensation may be, “Do you anticipate any available funding for this project?” Please note: if you are asking someone to host you for a Practicum, the supervisor may be thrilled to have you, but may not have a budget to pay you. While we don’t encourage unpaid Practicums, if it will boost your resume and/or if it’s in your dream organization, you may want to consider it. If you decide to accept this, you may want to look

for a separate paid internship or part-time job to help with income. Additionally, please inquire about BUSPH financial awards that are available from time to time to support unpaid Practicums.

To identify potential contacts, here are some resources to consider which can be found on our Practicum website (<http://www.bu.edu/sph/students/Practicum/>):

- **[Abstract Book](#):** Our Practicum Abstract Book from previous semesters provides Practicum descriptions viewable by academic concentration/certificate or by host organization.
- **[Past Practicum Database](#).** Conduct a keyword search in our password-protected Past Practicum Database to view Practicum sites from the last 2 years. You will have access to Practicum Supervisor contact information, which you can use to inquire about potential opportunities. Note: Before reaching out to any past Practicum Supervisors, we encourage you to discuss a strategy with a Practicum Advisor (contact sphpract@bu.edu).
- **Alumni and Professional Networking**
 - Join the [BUSPH LinkedIN Group](#).
 - Business cards are encouraged for networking at alumni or other career events
 - For more information, see “*Networking with Alumni*” on the Careers & Practicum website.

5. Timeline for Identifying and Completing Practicums

Practicums are flexible, and can start and finish any time during the year up until your final semester (*check deadlines for submitting final deliverables in order to graduate*). The 240 hour minimum requirement may be completed over one, two, or more semesters depending on your scheduling needs and the needs of the Practicum organization.

While some students hope to secure Practicums 3-4 months prior to starting, public health organizations often don’t know what their project needs are that far in advance; their work needs can change weekly. Therefore, it’s not uncommon for many students to secure a Practicum one month before the start date. With that said, here is what we recommend:

- It’s still never too early to start networking, no matter what your timeline is for completing a Practicum.
- For summer-start Practicums, begin applying (depending on application deadlines) in late winter/spring. As noted above, Practicums can be posted through June and July, even for summer time start dates.
- For spring Practicums, you may want to begin looking in fall/winter.
- For fall Practicums, you may want to begin looking in the summer/early fall.
- For consulting firms, see additional information below.
- Continuously check Handshake, websites and other job alerts (such as Indeed.com) for “early-bird” deadlines such as those at hospitals with Administrative Internships and other organizations with formal internship programs.

SECTION III: PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

1. Eligibility and Practicum Hours

- a) MPH students who matriculated in or after Fall 2016 must complete a minimum of 240 hours in a public health organization. You can complete your Practicum at one of the many healthcare and public health organizations in Boston or any location around the globe.
- b) You must complete the Core Curriculum (16 credits) to be eligible to register for the Practicum. Note: MS/MPH students may register for the Practicum before the Core courses are completed. Other dual-degree students may contact sphpract@bu.edu for information.
- c) The Practicum must be registered as a course which begins by gaining approval using the Practicum Portal as a starting point. NOTE: THIS IS NOT THE SAME PROCESS AS REGISTERING FOR A COURSE THROUGH OPEN COURSE REGISTRATION. SEE SECTION IV FOR DETAILS.
- d) International students must complete two semesters of full-time study, to be eligible to register for their Practicum. Please [visit the ISSO](#) for full details about registration.

2. Applying “Field-Based” Course Hours Toward Practicum Hours

Students may deduct 30 hours from the required 240 hours if you complete an approved field-based course. See the eligible courses below. While this is an option for students, we encourage less experienced students and career changers to gain as much experience they can through completing hours in both the field-based courses AND their Practicums in order to gain skills and build your resume. If you plan to use hours from completion of a field-based course toward your Practicum requirement, please contact sphpract@bu.edu with the subject line "**Field-Based Course Hours**". Additionally, we recommend registering for those courses as soon as possible as seats are often limited and go quickly. **You must complete 240 hours in total to graduate; if you planned to complete these 30 hours in your last semester and did not get into the course, you are unable to graduate.**

- a) GH 743: Implementing Health Programs in Developing Countries: Making Programs Work
- b) GH744: Program Design for Global Health
- c) MC802: Implementing Community Health Initiatives: A Field-based Course in Leadership and Consultation
- d) PM832: Operations Management in Health Care
- e) PM835: Lean Management Techniques for Quality Health Care
- f) SB806: Communications Strategies for Public Health Organizations

3. Practicum Components

Your Practicum must meet public health [Learning Competencies](#) and must include [Deliverables](#) that you will complete to gain skills and knowledge in each area. The Practicum should also demonstrate your ability to perform effectively on interprofessional teams (fifth learning

competency).

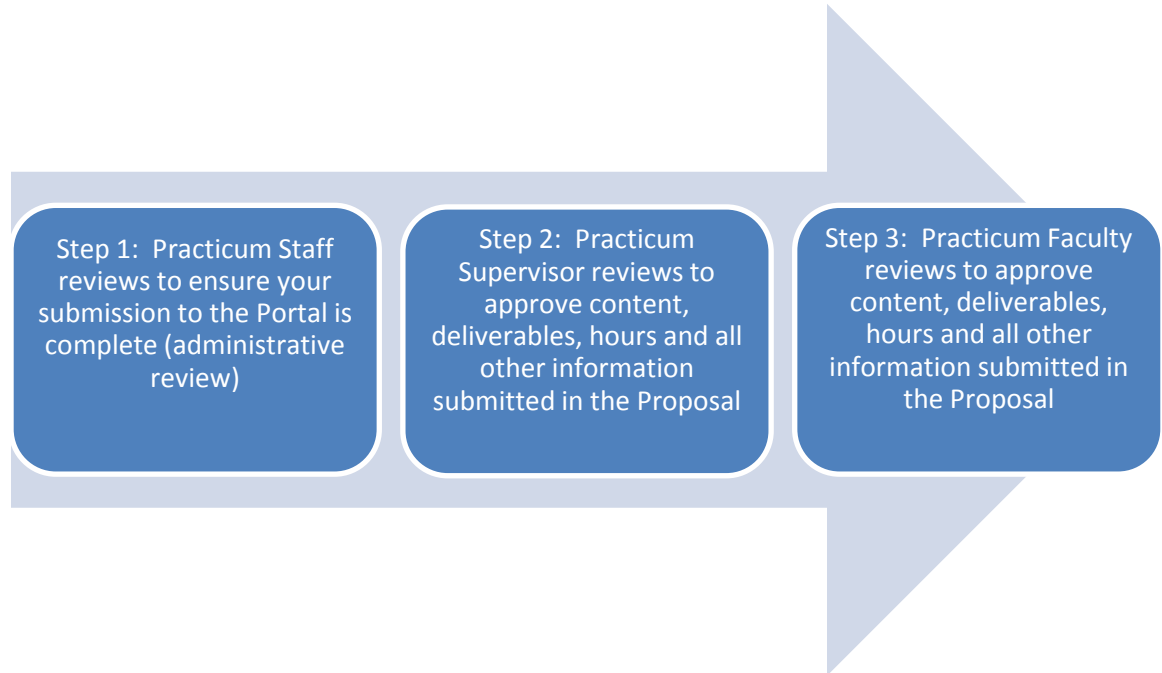
4. Practicum Search Advising Support

Ultimately it is the student's responsibility to secure a Practicum. Students are encouraged to consult with Faculty Advisors and Curriculum Program Managers to 1) determine when the best time is to complete your Practicum based on your academic schedule and goals; and 2) discuss career interests and goals to help in your decision making process. Additionally the CPO has dedicated staff to provide Practicum advising and Practicum search resources including SPH Handshake, our annual Practicum & Internship Expo, and employer/alumni networking.

SECTION IV: PRACTICUM REGISTRATION AND COMPLETION

1. **Create Practicum Portal Account.** All steps in the Practicum approval and review process will be completed through the BUSPH Practicum Portal. To begin using the Practicum Portal, please email sphpract@bu.edu to request access. Include your first name, last name and BU ID#. After your request is approved by SPH staff, you will receive an automated email within 24 hours with a link to log into the Practicum Portal using your kerberos password.
2. **Gain Practicum Proposal Approval.** Complete the Practicum Proposal Form (see Appendix) in the Practicum Portal. The Practicum Proposal Form outlines expectations, scope of work and anticipated Deliverables which are tangible work products.
 - a) Choose four public health Learning Competencies that you hope to address during the Practicum and identify Deliverables (tangible work products) that you will complete to gain skills and knowledge in each competency area. A minimum of two Deliverables must be completed, and a Deliverable may be used to showcase attainment of more than one competency. *Note: You may choose a combination of FOUNDATIONAL and FUNCTIONAL competencies, but a minimum of two must be foundational competencies.*
 - b) The Practicum is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to perform effectively on interprofessional teams, so all MPH students will have that competency PRE-SELECTED in the Practicum Portal as a fifth competency. And, one of your Deliverables must showcase this competency to perform effectively on interprofessional teams.
 - c) When the Practicum Proposal is submitted through the Practicum Portal, it will go through this **3-Step process below**. You will receive an automated message after the review process is fully completed, and it has been approved.

Figure 1: Practicum Proposal 3-Step Review Process for Students



Note: Be sure to hit the **SUBMIT** button in the Practicum Portal. All automated messages from the Practicum Portal will be sent to your BU email address. For example, this may include a question or comment back regarding your Practicum Proposal from one of the reviewers.

- d) **Important:** To register for the Practicum, it starts with having your Practicum Proposal approved through the Practicum Portal:
- Once your Practicum Proposal is approved, an automatic email will be sent to the Registrar's Office to begin the Practicum registration process. **NOTE: THIS IS NOT THE SAME PROCESS AS REGISTERING THROUGH OPEN COURSE REGISTRATION.**
 - Next, the Registrar's Office will register you for PH976, the Public Health Practicum, and send you a confirmation email. The Registrar's Office will enter in your expected start and end date (taken from what you shared in your Practicum Proposal).
 - **The Registrar's Office must receive this message from the Practicum Portal no later than one week prior to your Practicum start date.**
 - Once you are officially registered, you will receive a confirmation email from the Registrar's Office stating you are now registered for PH976.

*******IMPORTANT*******

- No hours or work products completed prior to the Practicum Approval process and Registration will count toward your Practicum requirement.
- Tip: We encourage you to submit your Practicum Proposal for approval as early as possible to allow time for each review needed in the Practicum Portal approval process. You may also want to give your Practicum Supervisor a “heads-up” about the approval process so they anticipate an approval email request from our Practicum Portal.

3. Complete Midpoint Review. The Midpoint Review ensures that the Practicum is on track and progress is being made towards anticipated goals and Deliverables, as outlined in your Practicum Proposal. The Practicum Portal will automatically prompt you to complete a Midpoint Review, based on the information in your Practicum Proposal (see Midpoint Review in Appendix).

- a) On the Midpoint Review Form, you will rate your level of mastery for each of the competencies on your Practicum Proposal, and provide one detailed description on one of the chosen competencies.
- b) Once you submit the Midpoint Review Form in the Practicum Portal, your Practicum Supervisor will receive an automated email to review, provide their own feedback, and submit that into the Practicum Portal.
- c) Your Midpoint Review Form will also be reviewed by Practicum Staff (administrative review) and a Practicum Faculty member (content review) in the Practicum Portal.

4. Complete Final Review. As your Practicum end date approaches, the Practicum Portal will send you a reminder to discuss Deliverables and competency mastery with your Practicum Supervisor in preparation for the Final Review. In the Final Review, you will rate your competency mastery level, give a detailed description and upload Deliverables (minimum of 2) to demonstrate your work toward the attainment of each competency. Your Practicum Supervisor will review and complete their portion of the Final Review Form. The Final Review and Deliverables will also be reviewed by Practicum Staff (administrative review) and Practicum Faculty (content review) in the Practicum Portal (see Final Review in Appendix).

*******IMPORTANT*******

If your Midpoint and/or Final Reviews have not been completed by your Practicum Supervisor, your Practicum will NOT meet the School’s requirements.

SECTION V: GLOBAL PRACTICUMS

1. **BU’s Office of Global Programs.** In addition to the information above, students who plan to complete International Practicums need to educate themselves about the risks of travel and prepare for potential adverse events. [The Office of Global Programs](#) on the Charles River Campus provides students with resources about planning for your time abroad.

2. **Preparation, Safety and Wellness.** Students planning to do a Practicum outside of the U.S. must have medical insurance and emergency & medical evacuation coverage valid in the countries they will be traveling in or through during - *and on their way* - to their Practicum. Students must take appropriate measures including visiting a travel clinic well before departure ([CDC's Traveler's Health](#)). Read [US State Department](#) postings on travel advisories.

Students should also check out: [Coursera course – built by Johns Hopkins – on International Travel Preparation, Safety, & Wellness](#). This is a terrific and robust training for MPH students on international Practicums. The course can be accessed without a fee during the introductory period, but you will be perpetually invited to acquire a certificate for additional cost.

3. **Planning Ahead.** Students should start thinking about their Practica early in their MPH program. Be flexible and open-minded and consider not only your learning needs but also the needs of the organization where you are seeking an International Practicum. To do meaningful work, you have to fulfill a need of the hosting organization. The first steps are to explore the possibilities, and try to refine:

1. Where do you want to go?
2. What do you want to learn? What gaps are you looking to fill to be more marketable post-graduation?
3. When do you want to go and for how long?
4. How much are you willing to spend, and what level of assistance might you need?
5. Can you fit and adjust the above into the Practicums available?

Students planning to do a Practicum abroad must discuss their plans and seek advice from their Advisor as well as reach out to the Career & Practicum Office. For additional questions and assistance, contact [Joe Anzalone](#) or [Gwenn Fairall](#).

SECTION VI: PRACTICUM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Who can I contact for help with my Practicum search, and to answer any Practicum-related questions?**

Students are encouraged to consult with Faculty Advisors and Curriculum Program Managers to 1) determine when the best time is to complete your Practicum based on your academic schedule and goals; and 2) discuss career interests and goals to help in your decision making process. Additionally the CPO has dedicated staff to provide Practicum advising and Practicum search resources including SPH Handshake, our annual Practicum & Internship Expo, employer/alumni networking and more.

2. **What is the difference between a Practicum and an Internship?**

Many organizations use the term “Internship” versus Practicum. The terms are often used interchangeably. It is totally fine to conduct an Internship as long as it meets all of your Practicum requirements.

3. **I started the program prior to Fall 2016 so I am considered a legacy student. As a legacy student, what do I need to do differently regarding the Practicum?**

As a legacy student, you started the program before the newly designed MPH degree was launched. For you, this means a few things:

- You must complete 112 hours for your Practicum.
- You can start your Practicum after completion of 12 credits.
- You must use Practice web to begin the Practicum registration process to request approval.
- After your Practicum is approved, you will receive an automatic email with a registration link. You may use 0-4 credits for your Practicum, and MUST register for the course:
 - PH970 – for zero credit
 - PH975 – 1-4 credits
- Instead of a School-wide poster session as a final project, please check with your department program manager regarding the final project for your concentration.
- Practice web is also where you upload your Midpoint and Final Review Forms which are completed during and at the end of your Practicum.
- For access to Practice web, questions and any other support on completing a legacy Practicum, please contact the Practicum Team at sphpract@bu.edu. Emphasize that you are requesting assistance in completing a *legacy* Practicum.

4. Can I get academic credit for my Practicum?

No, the Practicum is a ZERO credit, pass/fail requirement of the MPH program.

5. Does my Practicum need to be approved? How do I register for it?

Practicum approval and registration is required. You may accept the Practicum before submitting it for SPH approval. BUT, it's still a good idea to review the Practicum's expected Learning Competencies and Deliverables with the Host Organization before submitting it for approval. In cases where information is limited, students may be asked to re-submit the Practicum Proposal with more information. For detailed instructions, please view our [Practicum Website](#).

6. Can I get paid for the Practicum?

Pharmaceutical, biotech and medical device companies, major hospitals, health insurers, and consulting firms all tend to pay an hourly rate. This is typically in the mid-high \$20's range per hour. Nonprofit organizations and government agencies can often be \$12-\$18/hour, unpaid, or offer a small stipend. A good way to ask about compensation may be, "Do you anticipate any available funding for this project?" Please note: if you are asking someone to host you for a Practicum, the supervisor may be thrilled to have you, but may not have a budget to pay you. While we don't encourage unpaid Practicums, if it will boost your resume and/or if it's in your dream organization, you may want to consider it. If you decide to accept this, you may want to look for a separate paid internship or part-time job to help with income.

7. I am an international student. Do I need to provide information to ISSO?

Yes, you must contact [ISSO to apply for Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#). This is required as part of your Practicum approval.

8. I am an international student. Can I conduct more than one Practicum?

No, you may only complete what is required of the MPH program which is 240 hours.

9. I am interested in research. Can I conduct my Practicum with a faculty member?

In most cases, CEPH does NOT allow students to support a faculty member's research for their required Practicum. [Exceptions](#) may be made if the research project involves you working across external stakeholders such as multi-site research partners and community-based participatory research partners (CBPR). Note: if the project does not fit this criteria, you can still gain excellent experience working under a faculty member as an intern or for an independent study project.

10. I am unsure of the kinds of public health settings and/or functional areas I should explore for my Practicum. Can the Career & Practicum Office help me with career-related research?

Check out our [Practicum "How to Begin Your Practicum Search" website](#). This site contains helpful tips on how to explore settings and functional areas that align with your career interests.

11. Does the Career & Practicum Office know about specific Practicums available? Do they have Practicum positions for me to apply to?

Yes. The CPO works very proactively to identify Practicum opportunities for students. All available Practicums are posted on [SPH Handshake](#). This is updated on a daily basis for students to review, and follow the application instructions to apply. In addition to searching SPH Handshake for open Practicums, we also encourage students to [leverage other strategies and tools to secure a Practicum](#).

12. I am interested in working at a consulting firm. Are there Practicum or Internship positions in consulting?

For summer internships to be used for your Practicum — generally speaking — application deadlines vary from fall to early January, with interviews and offers extended by February. For smaller "boutique" consulting firms, generally speaking, recruiting can be on an as-needed basis and/or January-March for summer internships. Note: There are more **job** opportunities for MPH candidates versus **summer internships**. If you are interested in consulting, it's also recommended to find a Practicum that matches the target consulting firm's clients. Consulting firms hiring MPH candidates often look for students who have worked with clinicians, "internal" clients, community stakeholders, etc; have worked successfully on teams; and have managed or led projects. Additional general advice for targeting consulting positions:

- Network with alumni and other connections to learn about individual firms' expertise and work cultures, and express your interest — internal referrals can go a long way. LinkedIn is the #1 resource to find contacts.
- Attend Employer Info Sessions and Career Fairs to learn more about firms and meet with representatives face-to-face. All dates are posted on SPH Handshake and updated regularly. Additionally, attend external networking events featuring consultants as guest speakers. [Propel Careers](#) and [Boston Young Healthcare Professionals](#) often host great events.

- Check each individual consulting firm’s website for specific recruiting timeline information. Participate in Career & Practicum Office workshops and schedule a mock interview to prepare for both behavioral and case interviews.

13. Does the Practicum have to align with BOTH the functional and context certificate areas?

Each student is required to meet at least five Learning Competencies. All students will address #21 (perform effectively on inter-professional teams) for their first competency. For the remaining four competencies, you may choose a combination of FOUNDATIONAL and FUNCTIONAL certificate competencies, but in terms of what is required, you must choose a minimum of two FOUNDATIONAL competencies. See full list of [List of Foundational and Functional Certificate Competencies](#).

14. I am interested in conducting a Global Practicum. Is the registration process different?

For registering your Global Practicum, it is the same process using the Practicum Portal EXCEPT that you must complete and submit an [Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability Waiver](#) that is required by Boston University’s Office of Global Programs.

15. Can I conduct a Practicum where I am currently employed?

Generally speaking, you may conduct a Practicum where you are employed as long as the Practicum meets SPH requirements and is different from your current role. For example, this may be in another division/department of your organization working on a project that encompasses different work. These requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For assistance, please contact sphpract@bu.edu.

16. I applied to some Practicums two weeks ago and haven't heard anything. Is it okay to contact the organization about my candidacy?

Unfortunately, many organizations do not have the resources to follow up with every candidate who applies to their Practicum. Also, in some cases, you may hear from an organization well after two weeks passes. If you found the Practicum posting on SPH Handshake, please contact sphpract@bu.edu to see if an Advisor may have an update. If you have a personal or professional networking contact there, it can be helpful to ask them for an update. Some Human Resources departments are open to receiving a follow-up call or email. While you may try that route, do not take it personally if you don’t receive a response.

17. A Practicum host has asked me to submit a writing sample. What should I send?

- The writing sample needs to be your own work (unedited). It generally is 3-5 pages.
- This could be something you have written professionally (job or internship) or course work.
- The topic should be as relevant to what you are applying for as possible.
- If it is part of a larger document, the section you use should make sense on its own.
- Samples include research paper, strategy document, policy brief, grant proposal, donor communications, and marketing content.

18. Who do I contact if I'm having problems in my Practicum? For example, what if my Practicum is not what was originally agreed upon in the Practicum Proposal?

As with most situations in careers and in life, unexpected changes and challenges may occur. If your agreed upon Deliverables have changed (or have not begun within a reasonable time period), we encourage you to schedule a meeting with your Practicum Supervisor to review the Practicum Proposal and discuss any changes that need to be made. It's always good to be flexible; flexibility and adaptability are important traits employers are seeking in MPH graduates during these changing times in our healthcare landscape. Another important time to discuss your progress is at the [Midpoint Review](#). As long as your final Deliverables meet the Learning Competencies, then it will fulfill the Practicum requirement. If there are other challenges, we encourage you to contact sphpract@bu.edu to speak with an Advisor.

19. Are remote Practicums allowed?

Yes, students may complete remote Practicums as long as they meet all Practicum requirements. For any questions, please contact sphpract@bu.edu.

APPENDIX: PRACTICUM PLAN TEMPLATE

PRACTICUM PLAN PART I: SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment is the process of learning more about yourself (interests, skills, values and preferred work styles) to help you explore career paths that are the right match for you. Please complete the below questions. The goal is to use this knowledge throughout your Practicum search process.

1. Name your **strongest interest areas** in the field of Public Health. Think about why you chose to pursue an MPH.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. Name your **strongest and/or preferred work assignments**. Think about classes and internships you enjoyed, etc.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Name your **strongest and/or desired potential skills**. For example, analyzing data.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
4. Name your **strongest values**. For example, you believe in helping vulnerable populations.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
5. Name your **preferred environment**. For example, do you prefer structure? Do you prefer working in teams?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

PRACTICUM PLAN PART II: RESEARCHING THE FIELD AND NARROWING DOWN YOUR PRACTICUM OPTIONS

Review the following resources and documents available through the Career & Practicum Office. As you are reading through these, create a “running-list” of anything that interests you. Keep your self-assessment in mind as you are doing this exercise and look for matches. This should include specific organizations, topics (i.e. industry/population/disease), project tasks and deliverables, skills needed/used, etc.

- [Certificate Path Guide](#) that matches your certificate (s)
- Career Library under “field resources” that matches your areas/certificate (s)
- [Past Practicum abstract books](#)
- Practicum postings in SPH Handshake that match your interests

PRACTICUM PLAN PART III: SUMMARIZING YOUR INTERESTS AND CREATING YOUR PRACTICUM SEARCH ROADMAP

Summary: Use your “running list” to complete the following tables.

Organizations of Interest	Roles of Interest	“Topic” Knowledge Needed	Specific Skills Needed
<i>Ex. Evidera, Waltham, MA</i>	<i>Ex: Research position with focus on qualitative research</i>	<i>Ex: Pharmaceutical industry knowledge</i>	<i>Ex: Conducting interviews with key stakeholders such as physicians</i>
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.

Using the above summary, complete the table below. Your answers will help you to develop your Practicum search “road map”!

Reflect on what you have learned above, and then complete the below table. HINT: THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE MISSING NOW IN YOUR BACKGROUND.

My Target PRACTICUM Organizations	My Target PRACTICUM Role	Knowledge I Want to Gain from my PRACTICUM	Skills I Want to Gain from my PRACTICUM
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.

PRACTICUM PLAN PART 1V: MARKETING YOURSELF

Marketing yourself is part of the Practicum search process – be modest, but not too humble! List the strengths that you would bring to a Practicum host.

<i>My Knowledge and Experience</i>	<i>My Applicable Courses (completed or to be completed)</i>	<i>My Skills</i>	<i>My Strengths and Attributes</i>
Ex: Research experience focused on chronic disease	Ex: Cancer Epidemiology	Ex: Conducting literature reviews	Ex: Collaborative, team player

Write out your 30-Second Elevator Pitch. Try to incorporate information from the above tables.

Example: “My undergrad degree is in biology and while I was in School, I did an internship doing bench research on vaccine development. Most of my tasks involved working in the lab to process specimens and enter patient information into their lab information system (LIS). I ended up realizing that I would be happier working outside of the lab in a higher level, team-based research role. I decided to go back to school for my MPH with Certificates on Epidemiology & Biostatistics and Chronic & Non-Communicable Diseases. I’m interested in your Practicum because it will expose me to IRBs, participant recruitment, and database management. I hope to leverage and hone my research and analysis skills, and would love to learn more about specific projects you are looking for a student to work on.”

How you will answer the question, “What are your career goals?” Fill in the blanks.

I hope to be working for a _____ (ex: Community Health Center) in a _____ role (ex: Program Coordinator). My goal would be to oversee _____ (ex. Quality improvement projects working with clinicians and administrators to improve access to care). There is so much need for help within the area of _____ (mental health), and I believe this role will help me to advance into a broader _____ (ex: Program Manager) role in the next 2-3 years.

Appendix: MPH Learning 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 (Required by CEPH, and pre-selected in Practicum Portal for all Practicums)

21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams

Systems Thinking

22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

MPH Functional Certificate Learning Competencies

Community Assessment, Program Design, Implementation, and Evaluation

23. Plan and conduct systematic community health needs assessments, integrating multiple sources of data and community and stakeholder input.
24. Design a public health intervention which is supported by public health evidence and responds to priorities identified through a community needs assessment.
25. Formulate an implementation and sustainability plan designed to engage community members, policy makers, practitioners, funders and researchers.
26. Design a program evaluation, including formative, process and impact evaluation, and be able to articulate a plan for evaluation using a standard logic model.
27. Apply strategies for equitable, collaborative partnerships with communities, based on common recognition of sources of structured social privilege and disadvantage and a shared goal of seeking to expand community assets and power to improve health outcomes.

Design and Conduct of Public Health Research

28. Evaluate relative strengths and weaknesses of various study designs to address a specific public health research question.
29. Identify methodological and practical issues involved with planning and implementing a public health research study, including issues relating to the responsible conduct of research and the protection of human subjects.
30. Access and analyze publicly available public health data sets, such as the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.
31. Identify, conduct, and interpret an appropriate statistical analysis for a given public health research question and study design.
32. Interpret and communicate the results, strengths, and limitations of a public health research article in both technical and non-technical terms.

Environmental Hazard Assessment

33. Collect and analyze environmental data and articulate the characteristics of major chemical, physical, and biological hazards.
34. Interpret measured or modeled concentrations or doses of hazards compared with risk-based and non-risk based criteria and guidelines.
35. Evaluate the influence of susceptibility based on a hazards' biological mode of action, and vulnerability on health risks for major environmental determinants of human disease.
36. Identify defensible intervention and prevention strategies to improve health through reduction in exposures to environmental hazards.
37. Critically assess articles related to environmental impacts on health, analyzing the strength and validity of the hypothesis, study design and methods, results, conclusions, and public health significance of primary research studies.

Epidemiology and Biostatistics

38. Calculate and apply appropriate epidemiologic and statistical measures to draw valid inferences and summaries from public health data.
39. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of epidemiologic and statistical reports from public health studies.
40. Analyze key sources of public health data, reflecting comprehension of the basic ethical and legal principles pertaining to the collection, maintenance, analysis, and dissemination of epidemiologic and public health information.

41. Communicate the results of epidemiologic and statistical analyses using written and oral presentations for both public health professionals and external audiences.
42. Describe the role of epidemiology and biostatistics for informing etiologic research, planning and evaluation of interventions, public health surveillance and health policy, with demonstration of performance in one of these areas.

Healthcare Management (CAHME)

43. Applies planning/management tools and techniques to achieve project completion (eg Gantt chart, project charter).
44. Analyzes healthcare data to identify strategies for improvement.
45. Seeks input from appropriate stakeholders to meet goals and expectations.
46. Improves one's own performance continuously based on feedback from others.
47. Demonstrates understanding of his/her role within the organization.
48. Understands and navigates the dynamics of conflict.
49. Presents in a clear and professional manner in formal and informal situations.
50. Writes in a clear, logical and grammatically correct manner.
51. Demonstrates conduct consistent with ethical standards.

Health Policy and Law

52. Analyze current health policy issues faced by countries, states, and local communities, including political, social, economic, and organizational factors.
53. Evaluate policy effectiveness, efficiency and equity.
54. Develop policy proposals that recognize legal and political constraints.
55. Determine the factors influencing successful policy implementation.
56. Effectively communicate policy and legal analysis through multiple channels to diverse audiences.

Health Communication and Promotion

57. Design a strategic plan for an intervention and communications strategy that is theory-driven, science-based, audience-centered, practicable, and evaluable.
58. Use a wide range of communications venues in support of social marketing campaigns, corporate responsibility campaigns, and media advocacy campaigns.
59. Develop effective communications that are appropriate to audiences with lower health literacy.
60. Design a process and outcome evaluation for a communications campaign.
61. Prepare and deliver a clear and effective oral briefing on a public health topic to the general public and to policymakers.

Monitoring and Evaluation

62. Design monitoring and evaluation plans for public health programs.
63. Articulate the purpose of formative, process, and outcome evaluations.
64. Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods in relation to their strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, with an emphasis on reliability and validity.
65. Apply analytic methods to evaluate the impacts and costs of public health programs and policies.
66. Support the use of data from monitoring and evaluation projects in informing evidence based decision making for the development of new programs and continuous quality improvement efforts.


Program Management

67. Develop oversight to support project-level activity, to ensure that the essential elements of a program and program goals are met by providing a decision-making capacity that cannot be achieved at project level.
68. Demonstrate skills in budget management, such as analyzing data, providing budget justifications, and developing budget formulations, which can be used to design and implement health programs in low and middle-income country settings.
69. Create monitoring plans to assess leadership and employee accountability, and review plans for management of projects, stakeholders and suppliers.
70. Critically assess program outcomes to identify needed changes, and ensure that monitoring systems are in place to enable program evaluation.
71. Propose specific solutions to a variety of program challenges related to human resources, information technology, supervision, logistics and management.

Appendix: Sample Practicum Deliverables

Deliverable/Tangible Product	Check Box	Deliverable/Tangible Product	Check Box
Community Health Assessment Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Design Public Health Intervention Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Process or Quality Improvement Plan Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	SAS Code Assignment (or other tech)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health Education Curriculum Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy Document (assessment/research, process map, recommendation, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health Communications Plan (plan, online communications, written materials, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost-Effectiveness Analysis Report	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literature Review Analyses Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Survey Design & Development Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and Evaluation Tool Development (methods, indicator development, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget, Vendor Selection, Contract and/or Supply Chain Analysis Report	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program Evaluation Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy Analyses and/or Proposal Report (lit reviews, stakeholder interviews)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk Assessment Analysis Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology Platform or Application Design Proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data Extraction, Collection and Analysis Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intervention and Implementation Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality Improvement Plan (assessment/research, process map, recommendation, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Impact Evaluation Plan or Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program Management Plan (evidence-based design, stakeholder analyses, financial plan, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Study Proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project Management Plan (work-plan, gantt chart, stakeholder engagement)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Statistical Analysis Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix: Practicum Portal – Practicum Proposal Screen Shot



[Help](#) [Log out](#)
[Students](#) [Practicum Sites](#) [Reports](#) [My Account](#) [User Admin](#)

FirstName
LastName
BU ID Number

[Practicum](#)
[File Upload](#)

Practicum Proposal	Midpoint Review	Final Review
<p><small>Instructions: All students must complete the following form in order for the practicum placement to be formally approved. Please review the details of the proposal and approve, or indicate if any information is incorrect/missing. A faculty representative will also review the form. Please contact practicum@bu.edu with any questions.</small></p> <p>Status: Pending submission</p>		
<p>Student Information</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>Name: <input type="text" value="FirstName LastName"/></p> <p>E-mail: <input type="text" value="email@bu.edu"/></p> <p>BU ID: <input type="text" value="BU ID Number"/></p> </div> <div> <p>Functional certificate (choose at least one):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Community Assessment, Program Design, Implementation, and Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Design and Conduct of Public Health Research <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Hazard Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Epidemiology and Biostatistics <input type="checkbox"/> Health Communication and Promotion <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare Management (CAHME) <input type="checkbox"/> Health Policy and Law <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring and Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Program Management </div> <div> <p>Context certificate (optional):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic and Non-communicable Diseases <input type="checkbox"/> Global Health <input type="checkbox"/> Infectious Disease <input type="checkbox"/> Maternal and Child Health <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health and Substance Use <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceuticals <input type="checkbox"/> Sex, Sexuality, and Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Social Justice, Human Rights, and Health Equity </div> </div>		

| | Practicum Site | Practicum Supervisor | Alternate Contact (optional) | |--|--|--| | <p>Practicum Site: <input type="text" value="Choose one, or enter your own"/></p> <p>Department: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Address 1: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Address 2: <input type="text"/></p> <p>City: <input type="text"/></p> <p>State/Province: <input type="text" value="Choose one, or enter your own"/></p> <p>ZIP/Postal Code: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Country: <input type="text" value="Select a country"/></p> | <p>Name: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Title/Role: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Phone #: <input type="text"/></p> <p>E-mail: <input type="text"/></p> | <p>Name: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Title/Role: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Phone #: <input type="text"/></p> <p>E-mail: <input type="text"/></p> | | | |
| **Practicum Information** Title/Position: Function: Description: Start Date: End Date: (if unknown, use expected date) Hours / week: Total hours: (240 hour minimum) How did you find your practicum? Are you being compensated? ☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, hourly rate: \$ Please choose four program competencies that you hope to address in the practicum (your fifth competency must be 'Perform effectively on interprofessional teams') and identify the deliverable or project you will be working on to gain skills and knowledge in each area. A specific deliverable can cover more than one competency. [Foundational Competencies](#) [Functional Competencies](#) [Click to download a list of sample practicum deliverables](#) Competency #1: Competency #2: Competency #3: Deliverable #1: Deliverable #2: Deliverable #3: | | |

Competency #4:	Deliverable #4:
Competency #5:	Deliverable #5:

Professional Responsibility

Does the project entail research involving human subjects and/or use of identifiable data? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If yes, has the project been reviewed and approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Does the project involve using data supplied by the practicum site? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If yes, can the practicum supervisor grant access to the data? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Are there any confidentiality issues or data restrictions?

[Save Progress](#)

Staff Review

Please select a faculty reviewer:

Do you approve the student's proposal? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Student to complete: ☐ Check here once requested updates are complete, and click Submit

If No, please provide feedback:

Comments to reviewer:

Supervisor Review

Are you an alumni of Boston University? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Do you approve the student's proposal? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Student to complete: ☐ Check here once requested updates are complete, and click Submit

If yes, which school/college?

If No, please provide feedback:

Comments to supervisor:

Faculty Review

Do you approve the student's proposal? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Student to complete: ☐ Check here once requested updates are complete, and click Submit

If No, please provide feedback:

Comments to reviewer:

Appendix: Midpoint Review

Student Assessment				
Please check this box to confirm that you have reviewed your Practicum Proposal and all information is up to date [C]				
Describe the activities of your Practicum and progress on deliverables [XX]				
Describe any challenges or obstacles that have affected the progress of the Practicum [XX]				
What is the plan to address these challenges or obstacles? [XX]				
Rate your proficiency on each competency				
[Competency #1]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #2]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #3]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #4]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #5]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
Provide a detailed description of how you are addressing one of the chosen competencies through the Practicum experience [Choose Competency] [XX]				
Are there any other issues that need to be addressed or feedback that you would like to share? [XX]				
Staff Review				
Approved:	[R] Yes [R] No	Date/time: [##]	Staff Comments to student: [XX]	
Student:	[C] Updates complete		Student Comments to Staff: [XX]	
Supervisor Review				
Describe any challenges or obstacles that have affected the progress of the Practicum [XX]				
What is the plan to address these challenges or obstacles? [XX]				
Rate the student's proficiency on each competency				
[Competency #1]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #2]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #3]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #4]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #5]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
Are there any other issues that need to be addressed or feedback that you would like to share? [XX]				
Approved	[R] Yes [R] No	on [##]	Supervisor comments to student:	[XX]
Student	[C] Updates complete		Student comments to supervisor:	[XX] [Submit]
Faculty Review				
Approved	[R] Yes [R] No	on [##]	Faculty comments to student: XX]	

Appendix: Final Review

Student Assessment				
Practicum information is up to date		[C]		
Rate your proficiency on each competency and provide a detailed justification				
[Competency #1]	[R] Novice [XX]	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #2]	[R] Novice [XX]	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #3]	[R] Novice [XX]	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #4]	[R] Novice [XX]	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #5]	[R] Novice [XX]	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
Overall Practicum experience		[XX]		
Review of Sponsor (Confidential feedback to BU Faculty)		[XX] Would you recommend this sponsor for a future Practicum? [R] Yes [R] No		
Feedback on Practicum process /		[XX]		
Staff Review				
Approved	[R] Yes [R] No	on [##]	Comments:	[XX]
Student	[C] Updates complete		Comments	[XX] [Submit]
Sponsor Review				
Rate the student's proficiency on each				
[Competency #1]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #2]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #3]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #4]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
[Competency #5]	[R] Novice	[R] Capable	[R] Competent	[R] Proficient
Final evaluation of work products		[XX]		
Overall review of student (Confidential feedback to BU faculty)		[XX]		
Approved	[R] Yes [R] No	on [##]	Comments:	[XX]
Student	[C] Updates complete		Comments	[XX] [Submit]
Faculty Review				
Approved	[R] Yes [R] No	on [##]	Comments:	[XX]
Student	[C] Updates complete		Comments	[XX]
Final grade	[R] Pass [R] Fail			[Submit]