

MPH Program Policies and Procedures Manual

Curriculum and Advising

Academic Advising

Academic advisors are appointed by the chairs, in consultation with the MPH Director

Curriculum Decisions

All changes related to the MPH curriculum, such as new courses or changes in the program of study, are approved by departmental curriculum committees and the MPH Curriculum Committee. Changes then are sent through the CHS Curriculum Committee, and subsequently channeled through the institutional curriculum review and evaluation processes.

Faculty: Hiring, Promotion and Tenure, Merit Pay

The MPH Director will serve as a member of the search committee for hiring each new faculty who is expected to devote a portion of his or her workload to the MPH Program.

When an MPH faculty member is considered for promotion or tenure (P & T), the MPH Director submits an evaluation form to the department chair to be considered by the department P & T committee. The form is a written comment on the extent and quality of contributions that the respective faculty member has made to the MPH program, particularly regarding teaching of MPH courses, service on MPH committees, and other activities in support of MPH goals. The same process and a similar form are used for annual evaluations of non-tenured faculty; the form is forwarded to the department's committee on evaluation of non-tenured faculty.

Merit pay is determined primarily through a process wherein faculty members submit a request and documentation for merit pay. Faculty members may invite the Director to give a letter of support for merit pay, commenting on their role and contributions to the MPH Program.

Course Evaluation for the Purposes of MPH Program Assessment

Each course in the MPH Program will be evaluated by students in the class at least once every two years, specifically to determine the extent to which students perceive that the course is addressing the MPH program competencies it is designed to develop. The MPH Director is responsible for administration of the instrument. The evaluation will typically be conducted during the last 2-3 weeks of the semester. The evaluation instrument and procedures will be reviewed, refined, and monitored by the MPH Assessment Committee (AC) at least every two years; any forthcoming recommendations regarding modifications to the instrument and the process will be submitted for approval by MPH faculty. In some cases, the Director may ask that a course evaluation be conducted at additional times, particularly if the course is new, or is taught by a new teacher, or if concerns arise concerning the expected emphasis on public health competencies.

The overall purpose of this component of MPH course evaluation is to provide the basis for Program assessment and ongoing monitoring and improvement. The results are not intended for evaluation of faculty teaching skills. These course evaluations for Program assessment can be used in promotion, tenure, and merit pay processes only if the faculty member submits them voluntarily.

Student Appeals, Complaints, and Grievances

Grade Appeals, Admission Appeals, Academic Integrity Issues

Procedures for grade appeals in MPH courses are consistent with those across the University, as outlined in the *EKU Student Handbook*. The MPH Director serves as an Ex-Officio member of the Graduate Academic Practices Committee in both departments that support the MPH options. Accordingly, the *EKU Student Handbook* states the following:

Students are to first register a grievance about a course grade with the appropriate faculty member. If a grade is challenged and satisfaction is not reached with the faculty member, the student files a complaint/grievance with the Department Chair. If a resolution is not reached, the grievance is referred to the departmental Academic Practices Committee (elected faculty, and student representative). If satisfaction is not reached through that process, the student subsequently can submit the grievance through the administrative line to the dean, the Provost, and the President. Note: A written appeal must be filed with the Chair within 30 days after the beginning of the next semester (exclusive of intersession and summer session).

Appeals from students regarding readmission recommendations are first made to the MPH Director and MPH Admissions and Recruitment Committee. If the appeal remains unresolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may appeal to the College Dean, CHS Admission/Readmission Committee, and the Graduate School.

Appeals involving academic integrity are handled by following the established University Academic Integrity policy <http://www.academicintegrity.eku.edu/>.

Complaints not appropriate for the processes listed above are handled in a way similar to any appeal process. If the complaint concerns a faculty member, a policy, or a course in one of the departments, the student brings the complaint to the department chair, who attempts to resolve the issue through discussion with the parties involved. If the complaint is more a Program-wide issue, such as transfer of a course, the student brings the matter to the MPH Director. If the complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student brings the complaint to the Dean of the College. If the complaint is still unresolved, a meeting of all interested parties may be conducted by the Graduate Dean and/or the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research.

Practicum

Student Practicum Manual

The Director or Practicum Faculty Supervisor will give a copy of the ECU MPH Practicum Manual to each student. (The Practicum Manual describes the Program's policies and procedures regarding the practicum.) <http://www.mph.ecu.edu/practicum>

The Program Director, members of the MPH Curriculum Committee (CC), and two to three public health practitioners chosen by the Director review the Practicum Manual annually. The Director makes any minor changes needed; substantive changes must be approved by the Director and the CC.

Required Hours

A total of 240 hours is required for the practicum. Recognizing that the practicum is practical experience as opposed to academic coursework, students must complete a minimum of 180 of the total 240 hours of the practicum in a direct work experience, under the supervision of a mentor (site supervisor or designee) from the public health practice setting. This is 180 hours of fieldwork at the site.

Site Selection

The ECU MPH Program faculty believe that a wide range of organizations and agencies can provide the most appropriate and valuable field practicum experiences for MPH students. Therefore, MPH option coordinators work closely with students to identify and arrange field practicum sites that meet the requirements of the practicum and the specific needs of individual students regarding their own career interests and according to specified criteria. In general, any organization that provides, plans for, coordinates, organizes, pays for, or regulates public health services is potentially appropriate as a practicum training site for ECU Public Health graduate students.

Typically, option coordinators identify a site and discuss its potential with the Director. The Program Director sometimes identifies a potential practicum site to suggest to an option coordinator. Overall considerations used to select a site are as follows.

The MPH Practicum Manual explicitly states the Program expectations of the practicum site as follows: "The site shall make its facilities available to be used for educational purposes. The site shall provide the student access to available information or sources of information which will further his or her education while assigned to the site." The time, location, and circumstances of all training is approved and mutually agreed upon prior to the practicum by the faculty and site supervisors. The Practicum Manual outlines the selection and approval process for students.

Table D 1: Site Selection Considerations

Availability of a site supervisor who is appropriately prepared through education and/or professional experience and who is willing and able to spend time with the student and provide guidance. Ideally, site supervisors should have a master's degree in public health or a related field and 3-5 years of experience as a public health professional. Those without a graduate or professional degree should have at least 5 years of experience in the specific field in which the student will be working.
Availability of other good role models with appropriate preparation through education and/or professional experience.
Good understanding of the educational needs of students, including the need to increase student responsibility and independence gradually.
Willingness to provide support, ranging from a desk and a phone to stipends or salary, transportation, and lodging.
Appropriateness, as related to a student's career goals and area of concentration.

Affiliation Agreements

The MPH Program Director is responsible for developing and maintaining affiliations with appropriate and approved local, state, and federal governmental agencies, industry, and institutions. Once an appropriate and approved local, state, and federal governmental agency, industry, and/or institutions has been identified as a potential practicum site, Option Coordinators submit a request to the Director for Program approval of the potential site, using the Clinical Agreement form (available on site). The Director then works with the CHS Dean's Office to initiate and complete the college-level (and, if necessary, University-level) approval process and affiliation agreement.

Faculty Supervision of Students

An MPH faculty in the student's area of concentration is assigned to the practicum as the practicum supervisor. S/he assures that the practicum supervisor has a background in public health and/or a related field of specialization and facilitates the relationship between the student and the practicum supervisor so as to support the learning objectives of the

practicum experience and assess student performance next to the MPH practicum competencies.

Table D.2: Faculty Supervisor Responsibilities

Review the educational Program goals and objectives, and the specific goals and objectives for the practicum experience.
Conduct a conference with the student to define goals, determine interests, and clarify objectives.
Verify with the MPH Program Coordinator that the practicum site has the appropriate Program and college-level approvals.
Perform the administrative functions relative to the acceptance and placement of students into the practicum site.
Serve as a resource and consultant to students during their practicum via phone calls, emails, and periodic on-site visits when possible, determine and discuss student progress with the student and site supervisor.
Evaluate students' accomplishments for the practicum next to specified practicum goals and objectives and assign a final grade.
Forward practicum forms, reports, and evaluations to the MPH Program Director in a timely fashion to be maintained in the student's official file.

Evaluation of Student Performance

The ECU MPH Program Faculty Supervisor is responsible to assign the final grade for the practicum experience, based upon the student's self-assessment, the Site Supervisor's written evaluation, and the Faculty Supervisor's assessment of the student's performance during the practicum experience.

Table D.3: Basis of Evaluation of Student Performance

Each student completes a portfolio of his or her practicum activities, reviews, and submits it to the faculty supervisor during the last week of the practicum. The portfolio is the student's opportunity to demonstrate the extent to which s/he has had the opportunity to work in areas related to Program competencies.
Each student completes a Final Field Practicum Report, reviews it with the Site Supervisor, discusses, and submits it to his/her faculty supervisor, along with his/her portfolio (described in #2 below) at or before the final week of the semester. The student's final course grade is based upon the extent to which s/he has met the basic requirements and accomplished the expressed objectives of the practicum experience (see Appendix...The Practicum Manual).
During the last few days of the practicum, the faculty supervisor meets with the student. This meeting includes an oral discussion of the experience and provides an opportunity for the faculty supervisor to assess the student's understanding related to the stated objectives.
During the semester, the site and faculty supervisors communicate via phone, email or site visits to discuss the progress of the student. At the end of the term, the site supervisor submits a final written evaluation of the student, and the Program's preparation for and support of the practicum experience.

Practicum for Experienced Public Health Professionals

Recognizing the importance of the practical experience in the overall educational experience, the practicum stands as a substantial part of the curriculum offering students an opportunity to develop competencies necessary to expand and advance in the field of public health.

Under certain circumstances, a student may be given permission to complete a practicum where he or she is currently employed. That is, students may seek approval from the Option Coordinator and the Director for a Public Health Employment-Based Practicum Placement (PHEBPP), using the following criteria as a guideline for such requests.

- Practicum placements must align with the five core areas of Public Health.
- Practicum placements must offer a student a new learning experience.
- While students may continue at the agency at which they are employed, they may not use continuation of the same job activities for the Practicum, nor can they be supervised for the Practicum by their regular job supervisor.

- A student must be an employee of the agency for at least six (6) months, and must have satisfactory employee evaluations in order to be considered for such placement.

Evaluation of Practicum Sites

Faculty supervisors are available to facilitate student learning experiences during practicum placement and assess the quality of these experiences on a formative basis through regular contact with the student and the practicum supervisor. In addition, the MPH Program Director formally reviews student evaluations of the practice sites and experiences at the conclusion of each practicum experience (see evaluation forms in the appendices of the MPH Practicum Manual in Resource file). A summary of these evaluations is then prepared by the MPH Program Director and formally reviewed by the MPH Assessment Committee each semester. Site evaluation and continuation is based not only on the student evaluations of practicum sites but the quality of preceptor evaluations of student performance as well.

Practicum Experience Waivers

Waivers are not granted for the practicum experience.

Recruitment and Admissions

The MPH Admissions and Recruitment Committee (ARC) reviews policies and procedures for recruitment and admission into the MPH Program next to its stated mission and the demographics and qualifications of the most recently admitted student cohort twice each year. Furthermore, the Committee acts in advisement to the Program Director with regard to suggestions about modifications to these policies and procedures. Admission requirements and a summary of Admissions Policies and Procedures are included in the MPH handbook, the ECU Graduate Catalog, <http://gradschool.ecu.edu/> and the Program website <http://www.mph.ecu.edu>. The admissions policies are summarized below.

Recruitment Policies

The ECU Master of Public Health (MPH) Program recruits qualified and dedicated students who have a wide range of interests, backgrounds, and experiences to bring into the educational Program and have the educational prerequisites, interest, and motivation for undertaking and advancing public health careers. As a result, the educational Program builds instructional experiences that maximize experiential learning and authentic assessment.

Likewise, in its recruitment and selection process, the Program recognizes and values the array of background, skills, and knowledge that its applicants bring, and that are appropriate for the diverse areas of public health and values diversity of thought, race, and gender in its student body. The MPH Program adheres to the University's Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity policies in all its recruitment activities. The Program recruits qualified students regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status.

Admission Policies

The Master of Public Health Program seeks to admit students who demonstrate the potential to be successful in graduate school, and who are committed to the public health profession, as evidenced by their interests, backgrounds, and experiences. While relevant work experience in public health is not a requirement for admission to the Program, knowledge of core public health values is an important factor when considering applicants to the MPH Program. In addition to this, admission standards reflect the requirements of the Graduate School as well as specific requirements and the mission of the Program. For admission into the Program, applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution with a GPA of 2.5 or better;
2. Combined score of at least 291 on the verbal and quantitative components of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or a score of 380 on Miller Analogies Test (MAT); the GRE and MAT are waived if the student has an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better or a 3.2 in their last 60 hours of coursework
3. Submission of graduate school application and related fee;
4. Submission of MPH Program application;
5. Submission of statement of personal and professional objectives (1½ to 2-pages);
6. Submission of three letters of recommendation (from) employers or previous professors; and
7. (for International applicants) TOEFL score of at least 580 for paper-based test and 237 for the computer-based version.

The MPH Program adheres to the University's Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity policies in all its admission activities. The Program admits qualified students regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status.

Workforce Development

The MPH Program is committed to workforce development as is our College and University administrators. The Program has a set of policy statements to which we adhere. These are listed below.

- The MPH director, working with Department chairs is responsible for recommending community continuing education opportunities for faculty/students.
- The MPH Director, working with Department chairs, will offer opportunities for faculty and students to assist local and district health departments and other public health agencies to plan for workforce needs in individual communities throughout EKU's service region.
- Individual academic departments (Health Promotion and Administration and Environmental Health) are responsible for working with national, state, local and district health departments and other public health agencies to ascertain, via needs assessment, the specific workforce needs for their individual agencies.