

GUIDELINES FOR FIELD PRACTICE WITH ACADEMIC CREDIT

Students who intend to undertake field placements with outside organizations for academic credit will need to fulfil the following criteria. This module will be graded on a “Completed Satisfactory/Completed Unsatisfactory” (CS/CU) basis.

1. Pre-requisites

Students must have completed at least 20 MCs of modules within the MPH programme before signing up for the Field Practice

2. Field practice duration

The student must spend a minimum 130 hours working with the organization. This may be full-time or part-time work spread over the academic semester, but must be completed within one academic semester. A full time field placement with an organization is expected to be of at least 3 weeks duration, but may be greater depending on organizational need and student commitment. The hours and duration should be agreed with the organisation in writing prior to the start of the internship, and submitted as supporting document to the field practice proposal.

3. Field practice proposal (weightage - 20%) (Maximum 5,000 words)

The student must have a well-defined project to pursue within the framework of the attachment and the organization. This can be an on-going project of the organization itself; however, the student will be required to demonstrate that he/she can produce tangible outcomes within the field practice time period.

Any student desirous of seeking academic credit must submit a detailed project proposal with the following sections:

- a) Details of the organization where field practice is proposed to be undertaken (name, place, public health area of work)
- b) Details of the organizational mentor (name, designation, qualifications/ area of expertise)
- c) Overall learning objective(s) of the field practice, specify relevance to the core competencies of the MPH programme (ref Table 1)
- d) Specific project to be undertaken during the field practice
 - i) Project title
 - ii) Project objectives – objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART), and should link to the learning objective(s)
 - iii) Public health relevance of proposed project
 - iv) Detailed description of the work proposed to achieve objectives identified in (b.) with estimated timelines – please be as specific as

possible (e.g. data collection for attitudes to breast feeding, survey in a rural community in XYZ, using a questionnaire already developed by organization, to complete 200 questionnaire interviews in two weeks)

- v) Terms of reference of field practice as agreed with the organization (a brief description of acceptable responsibilities and duties within the organization, student and organization liabilities)

4. Mid-term report (weightage - 20%) (Maximum 5,000 words)

This should include a detailed description of the progress so far in terms of the work and timelines stated in the proposal, a discussion of difficulties or issues encountered which may necessitate change(s) to project objectives, activities and/or timelines, and the changes proposed. The mid-term report should be based on student discussions with organizational mentor and academic supervisor and should include their feedback as well. Report submission date will be assigned when application is approved.

5. Final report with detailed discussion of achievements in term of identified objectives (weightage - 50%) (Maximum 10,000 words, including references)

The final report should be in a format similar to the project proposal, with detailed description of the actual work undertaken and objectives achieved including problems encountered and solutions, discussion of the relevance and utility of the project for the student, organization and public health, and a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the work undertaken. Report submission date will be assigned when application is approved.

6. Student performance during field practice (weightage - 10%)

Mere completion of the requisite duration will not qualify the student for a “Completed Satisfactory” grading. Evaluation will be by the academic supervisor with feedback and inputs from the organizational mentor.

7. Assessment

Grading will be determined by the initial proposal, mid-term report and final report and student performance. Award of CS/CU will be endorsed by the module coordinator.

Table 1. Core competencies for the MPH programme

Plan, conduct and analyze epidemiologic studies to assess and monitor the health of communities and populations at risk, and to identify health problems and priorities
Review, appraise and disseminate health information in the practice of evidence-

based health care
Investigate and control occurrences, including outbreaks, of infectious and non-communicable diseases, using relevant approaches and technologies
Identify and control factors in the natural and man-made environment (air, water, land, housing, workplaces) which affect health
Apply concepts and methods in social and behavioural sciences to formulate, implement and evaluate health promotion programmes
Analyze policies and strategies for effectiveness in the organisation and delivery of health care
Plan, organise and manage public health programmes and examine their use, cost, quality, accessibility, and outcomes
Advocate for public health programmes and resources; communicate effectively on relevant matters in professional and public settings
Work effectively in a public health team

Guidance and facilitation during field placement

Each student will be assigned an academic supervisor with expertise in the area relevant to the proposed field placement. This supervisor may be different from the pre-assigned academic advisor of the student. The student will also be expected to identify an organizational mentor at the organization where the field placement will take place. Students are expected to communicate on a regular basis with both academic supervisor and organizational mentor from the time of proposal development till completion. Students should feel free to seek feedback, support and advice on project related issues from their supervisor, mentor or module coordinator. Any appropriate mode of communication may be used, depending on field placement location.

Roles and responsibilities of Organizational Mentors

Organizational Mentors should provide interns the following

- Orientation to the organization, including vision, mission, key areas of work and work ethos
- Assignment to project(s)/ activity(ies) which will allow fulfilment of project objectives identified for the internship within the time lines stated
- Access to relevant organizational resources, eg work station, data systems, stationery etc
- Opportunities for regular communication to discuss and monitor progress and facilitate student sharing
- Explanation of expectations from student in terms of punctuality, behaviour, dress code and other work policies
- Guidance, assessment and feedback to enhance student competencies

Organizational Mentors are also expected to provide evaluation and feedback to the Academic Mentors on

- the student's performance during the internship, and
- evaluation of the project – initial proposal, mid-term and final