Master of Public Health

NUS National University of Singapore | Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health

GUIDELINES FOR SPH5801 FIELD PRACTICE

Students who intend to undertake field placements with outside organisations for academic credit will need to fulfil the following criteria. This course SPH5801 will be graded on a "Completed Satisfactory/ Completed Unsatisfactory" (CS/CU) basis.

1. **Pre-requisites**
   Students are expected to complete at least 20 units of courses within the MPH programme before enrolling for SPH5801 Field Practice.

2. **Field practice duration**
   The student is expected to spend a minimum 130 hours working with the organisation. 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 organisation is expected to be of at least 3 weeks duration but may be greater depending on organisational 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 organisation. This can be an on-going project of the organisation 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 organisation where field practice is proposed to be undertaken (name, place, public health area of work)
   b) Details of the organisational 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 (refer to 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 organisation, to complete 200 questionnaire interviews in two weeks)
      v) Terms of reference of field practice as agreed with the organisation (a brief description of acceptable responsibilities and duties within the organisation, student and organisation 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 organisational 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, organisation 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 organisational 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 course coordinator.

Table 1. Core competencies for the MPH programme

- Estimate the burden, and identify patterns and determinants of disease and ill-health in communities
- Apply appropriate research methods and analytic tools to identify solutions to address community
- health and healthcare related problems
- Apply concepts and methods in social and behavioural sciences to evaluate and inform
- development of health promotion policies, programmes and services
- Apply knowledge of health systems, policy and financing, health economics and key global
- health issues to evaluate and inform development of public health policies, programmes and services
- Take into consideration ethical and legal principles in public health practice and policy
- Communicate public health research evidence effectively to different audiences
- Understand own professional strengths and personal skills to lead and work collaboratively 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 organisational mentor at the organisation where the field placement will take place. Students are expected to communicate on a regular basis with both academic supervisor and organisational 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 course coordinator. Any appropriate mode of communication may be used, depending on field placement location.

Roles and responsibilities of Organisational Mentors

- Organisational Mentors should provide interns the following
  - Orientation to the organisation, 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 organisational resources, e.g. 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

- Organisational 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