

Frequently Asked Questions about Hosting an MPH Student

What makes an MPH field experience in public health unique? A field experience is the culmination of a student's graduate education and allows them to apply the information they have learned in the classroom. This experience is required for all students enrolled in the program. Students work with their faculty advisor and agency preceptor to prepare an agreement that matches their learning objectives with the needs of the organization. The student is required to produce a final written report and present an oral summary of the experience before receiving their degree. Formal evaluation is conducted by the agency preceptor/mentor and the student's supervisory committee.

The preceptor is expected to arrange a variety of experiences encompassing several public health disciplines, provide opportunities for interaction with individuals and groups, include the student in meetings and events for professional development, and offer career advice and counsel as a mentor.

What type of academic preparation and skills can I expect my student to have? The student is knowledgeable about the core functions of public health and has advanced knowledge in an area of emphasis. To receive credit, the student is enrolled for 3, 4, or 6 credit hours. When possible the student is encouraged to complete all of the classroom courses before their field experience. In addition, an individual student is likely to have many other skills your organization can use.

What are the student's expectations of the field experience? As a graduate student, he/she is expected to be treated as an entry-level employee who is an integral part of the work team. The student should be given work space, access to a phone and other technology equivalent to that provided to other employees with similar responsibilities.

When is the student available? Placement is very flexible to meet the needs of the student and organization. Generally, the field experience is on a fulltime basis either during the summer or one semester. When needed to accommodate schedules it can be part time and go two semesters.

How many clock hours does the student spend at my location? Most students are required to complete 6 credit hours for their field experience which equals 240 clock hours (6 weeks at 40 hours per week). Students completing a thesis will complete 3 credit hours for 180 clock hours.

Does the student expect to receive a salary or stipend? If so, how much? When possible. Typically, many public health agencies are unable to provide a stipend, but they usually offer something unique and valuable to the student that cannot be found elsewhere. The student, however, has other financial aid options, such as scholarships, traineeships, fellowships, or other support.

What is the role of the agency supervisor/preceptor? The agency preceptor should have expertise in public health and/or an MPH and competence in supervising and mentoring students. As the student's preceptor you will be asked to provide:

- An orientation to the agency or organization
- Access to the resources necessary to complete projects
- Access to coworkers and meetings to assist in providing support for the work performed
- Opportunities to explore career options and other professional development through information-seeking interviews within and outside your workplace
- Profession evaluation and feedback on progress (both strengths and weaknesses)

Are students covered with health insurance or worker's compensation? Enrollment as a student during the field experience qualifies them for health insurance coverage either through an independent policy or through their parent's policy. Liability and worker's compensation coverage is determined according to policies within each organization or agency, program faculty will work with the supervisor on a case by case basis.

How do I establish a field experience partnership with the MPH Program at KSU? Just contact us.

Are students available for short term or research projects? Yes! There are ample opportunities to work with MPH graduate students and faculty. If you have a part-time position for work on a specific project just let us know.