Handbook for Experiential Learning:
Student Guide to the SPH Internship and Field Placement Programs

School of Public Health
Internships & Career Services
1 University Place, GEC 100
Rensselaer, NY 12144
Phone: (518) 402-0283
Fax: (518) 402-0329
Website: www.albany.edu/sph
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**MPH DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

The internship component of the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree is viewed as the culminating experience of your graduate academic program. It is designed to provide a meaningful opportunity for you to integrate knowledge gained during academic coursework in a professional public health setting.

**Internship Eligibility**

In order to be eligible to register and begin an internship,

- Full-time students need to complete at least one full year of coursework, which includes completion of at least four core courses.
- Part-time students need to complete at least 24 credits towards their degree in order to be eligible.
- Certificate students entering an MPH Program need to complete one full semester in the MPH program prior to being eligible to participate in an internship.

All students must hold a GPA of 3.0 or higher to be eligible to participate in an internship.

The MPH Core Courses are as follows:

- **Epi 500/501** Principles and Methods of Epidemiology I 3 credits
- **Epi 551/552** Principles of Statistical Inference I 3 credits
- **HPM 500** Health Care Organization, Financing & Delivery 3 credits
- **HPM 525** Social and Behavioral Aspects of Public Health 3 credits
- **EHS 590** Introduction to Environmental Health 3 credits
- **BMS 505** Biological Basis of Public Health 3 credits
- **SPH 680** First Year MPH Seminar (fall and spring semester) 2 credits (1 credit each x 2)
- **SPH 685** Capstone MPH Seminar 1 credit

The MPH degree internship requirements are extensive and total 9-credits or 720 hours of experience. The 9-credit requirement can be filled by various combinations of 3-credit (240 hours) or 6 credit (480 hours) internships. **At least** 6 credits of internship have to be completed within the student’s chosen area of concentration. The additional 3 credits of internship may also be completed within the student’s area of concentration, or it can be completed within a different concentration. All 9 credits may not be completed within the same setting or with the same mentor.

**Internship Waivers**

Up to 6 credits of internship may be waived for students with significant public health experience that was obtained prior to entering into the MPH program. Students have up until their last semester to apply for a waiver of internship credit by way of the Internship Waiver Review Committee. Waiver
applications submitted any later than this will not be considered by the Waiver Committee. **Students cannot apply for a waiver during their last semester at SPH.** It is recommended that students with prior public health experience submit their waiver application as early as possible during their program because the outcome of their application will determine how they continue to navigate their plan of study and fulfill remaining internship credits.

There are two standing deadlines each year for the submission of waiver applications – one during the fall semester on October 15th, and one during the spring semester on February 15th. **For more waiver information please see the Internship Director.** Students cannot apply for a waiver for work completed during the course of their degree program. Also, undergraduate internships are NOT eligible for waiver credit.

**Master’s International Program: Internship Waiver Process**

The Master’s International (MI) Program is a joint program involving the University at Albany, School of Public Health and the Peace Corps. The SPH establishes the academic requirements for the degree to be earned by the student and the Peace Corps will place the student overseas in an assignment that closely matches the student’s area of study. The student’s Peace Corps experience related to public health will serve as fulfillment of the MPH internship requirement and up to 9 credit hours of internship will be waived upon completion of the student’s Peace Corps tour of duty.

Following the successful completion of the two year Peace Corps placement, the returning student will provide a Close of Service (COS) description and a final report on their experience to be reviewed by the Global Health Director, Internship Director, and the student’s faculty advisor. The objective of the paper is for the student to detail their responsibilities and experiences during their placement and relate them to public health. In addition, to fulfill the waiver requirement, the student must complete either an oral presentation at an SPH Global Health Seminar or present a poster on their Peace Corps experience at the annual SPH Poster Day. Master’s International students also need to satisfactorily participate in the annual SPH Student Poster Day. Please see **Student Poster Day** section (p. 19) for more information.

For more information about this opportunity, please contact the Center for Global Health located on the SPH campus.

**Coverdell Fellowship: Internship Waiver Process**

The Coverdell Fellows Program is a joint program involving the University at Albany, School of Public Health and the Peace Corps. Coverdell Fellows are eligible to have up to 9 credit hours of internship waived in recognition of previous Peace Corps services and/or other public health work experience. For more information about the Waiver process and to obtain an Internship Waiver Application, please see the Internship Director.
Following successful completion of the two year Peace Corps placement, the Coverdell Fellow will provide a Close of Service (COS) description and an Internship Waiver Application to be reviewed by the Global Health Director, Internship Director, and the student’s faculty advisor. In addition, the student must complete an interview with the Global Health Director to discuss their Peace Corps experience and its public health relevance. If the student’s Peace Corps experience involves direct public health work, the student may receive up to a 9-credit internship waiver. If the student’s Peace Corps experience is lacking in public health experience, the student may be required to complete an additional 3- or 6- credit internship through the SPH Internship Program.

Coverdell Fellows must satisfactorily participate in the annual SPH Student Poster Day. Please see Student Poster Day section (p. 19) for more information.

For more information about the Coverdell Fellowship or the Coverdell Fellowship Waiver please contact the Center for Global Health located on the SPH campus.

**Internship Hours**

Students typically complete their first internship during the summer after their first academic year. A 6-credit internship over the summer months involves 40 hours/week for a period of 12 weeks. A 3-credit internship over the summer months entails 20 hours/week for 12 weeks; or 40 hours/week for a period of 6 weeks. Actual number of hours per week may vary depending on internship site. The total number of hours for a 3-credit internship is 240, and for a 6-credit internship it is 480 hours. The remaining credit requirement can be completed throughout the second academic year at 20 hours/week for 12 weeks during the fall or spring semesters. During the academic year, only a 3-credit internship is allowed at 20 hours/week. Students may not work full-time at an internship during the fall and spring semesters while they are concurrently taking courses.

Please note that you must be registered for your internship during the semester in which you are completing it.

**Qualifying Internship Experiences**

In 2006, the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) identified core competencies for the Master of Public Health degree in graduate schools and programs of public health. The Master of Public Health (MPH) curriculum is organized around the five core disciplines of public health: Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental Health Science, Healthy Policy and Management, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Knowledge and skills in these disciplines equip our graduates to analyze and consider solutions to public health problems at the community, institutional, and societal levels. In addition to these discipline-specific competencies, ASPH has identified a number of interdisciplinary/cross-cutting competencies which have become increasingly important to effective
public health practice. These include: Communication and Informatics, Diversity and Culture, Leadership, Professionalism, Program Planning, Systems Thinking, and Public Health Biology.

MPH internships are designed to provide you with the opportunity to develop competence relevant to the Discipline-specific and Interdisciplinary/Cross-cutting Competencies as outlined by the ASPH. A table of all of these competencies can be found in the back of this handbook. MPH internships should incorporate multiple competencies across the various skill areas. Positions will differ based on setting but should involve the competencies within each area. In reviewing positions or considering various projects, you should refer to the MPH Internship Discipline-specific and Interdisciplinary/Cross-cutting Competencies to ensure your internship meets expectations.

In general, a relevant public health experience must include at least one of the following components:

1. Assessing, monitoring, or conducting surveillance of health problems/services in a population;
2. Establishing health objectives and priorities;
3. Conducting research on population-based health problems including biological, environmental, and behavioral issues;
4. Developing and/or implementing policies and intervention strategies to meet public health needs; or
5. Studying the natural history of disease or health-related effects in a population.

Acceptable experience may include only a portion of a full project that is ongoing or continued after the student’s participation. Ideally, it will involve a project in which you can make significant progress during the timeframe of the position. A literature review is often required as part of any placement project but is alone, not sufficient to constitute an internship experience. The internship experience should be sufficient to warrant a formal presentation in an oral or poster format. All activities should have a clear and definable Public Health impact.

While most jobs entail some level of clerical work, mentors are notified that these activities do not satisfy the graduate internship requirements of the MPH degree. Thus, photocopying, scheduling, mail preparation, etc. should not consume a significant portion of your experience. If you have concerns regarding this, please discuss them with the Internship Director or your faculty advisor.

All internships & placements, regardless of site (international internships included) must have the approval of the Internship Director prior to the student beginning work at the site.

MS Degree Requirements: Field Placements

For MS students with a concentration in Epidemiology, 3 credits (240 hours) of field placement are required to complete the degree. MS Epidemiology students register for their field placement with their
department. With regard to required paperwork, MS students are responsible for the same paperwork and deadlines as MPH students. However, MS students do not base their field placements on the MPH Core Competencies, nor are they expected to report on fulfilling these competencies during the completion of their field placement. MS Epidemiology students also have to complete their final oral presentation for the placement at the School of Public Health rather than at their placement site. For more information about the MS Field Placement please also see the Epidemiology Department Handbook.

**Developing Your Own Internship:**
Students often create their own internship at a particular organization or with an individual that they wish to work with. While this is perfectly acceptable, it is strongly advised that students work closely with the Internship Director and their faculty advisor while doing this to ensure that all degree requirements are met. Guidelines for developing your own internship are closely aligned with guidelines used by others that formally submit projects to the SPH Internship & Field Placement Program. Student-designed internships must identify ways in which a placement will address the MPH Discipline-Specific and Interdisciplinary/Cross-cutting Competencies as well as meet the academic requirements of the degree program. Most internships require at least a basic application of some skills in several competency areas. At least five skills within the major concentration area/discipline of the internship must be identified. In addition, at least five others outside of the major concentration or from the cross-cutting competencies must be identified in the original project description. For more information about developing your own internship, please see the Internship Director.

**In-Situ Internships & Field Placements:** The rare example of a student requesting an ‘in-situ’ (on-site, in current or original position) internship at a current site of employment involves extensive communication with the Internship Director and the faculty advisor. An in-situ internship involves the student participating in an internship project that extends above and beyond the scope of their daily job function. Internship or placement credit cannot be given for one’s daily job activities. Students are also strongly encouraged to work with a mentor other than their direct daily supervisor for the duration of their internship project. Typical requirements, such as the number of hours and required paperwork, still apply for students completing in-situ internships.

**Host Organizations:** Host organizations may include county, state or federal government entities, not-for-profit organizations, private sector companies, and other organizations directly involved in the field of public health. Students are expected to act as professionals at all times and contribute in a positive and significant way to the organization. Mentors within the organization are expected to remain mindful of the fact that the internship is an academic-related opportunity for students to learn from and observe a real-world public health work environment. The arrangement should be a mutually beneficial relationship for both the student and the organization.
**Internship Mentors:** Mentors should have advanced degrees, ideally within the field of public health and should hold decision-making positions within the host organization. In cases where an individual has been practicing public health for numerous years and can offer a wealth of experiences to a graduate public health student, an advanced degree is not required. A daily supervisor with significant experience as a public health practitioner may also be assigned to a student in addition to the mentor. Mentors are asked to provide the following:

- Orientation to the organization and the relevant public health program(s)
- Explanation of work rules and procedures, including time and attendance policies to which the student will be held accountable
- Access to resources such as a computer workstation, relevant data systems, and/or reimbursement for necessary travel
- Tangible project assignments and a timeframe for completing assignments
- Opportunities for involvement in a diverse range of organizational activities including attendance at internal and external meetings, interactions with colleagues and organizational leaders, etc.
- Regular opportunities for communication to discuss progress and ensure expectations of all parties are being met
- Guidance, feedback and assessment regarding project deliverables and School internship paperwork requirements

**Faculty Advisement**

Your faculty advisor plays a critical role throughout the internship & field placement process. You should be proactive in seeking advice and assistance from your faculty advisor in designing your internship plan, selecting placements, completing course requirements, and determining how your internship/placement fits into your long-term career goals. Your advisor will be available to guide you in identifying ways in which a placement will address the MPH Discipline-specific and Interdisciplinary/Cross-cutting Competencies and meet the academic requirements of your degree program. For MS Epidemiology students, you should work closely with your faculty advisor and department to ensure that your field placement experience meets all of your degree requirements.

**Student Responsibilities**

As a graduate student in a professional degree program, the School’s expectations of you are high. While various sources of support are available through the Dean’s Office, Department staff, faculty advisors, and internship mentors; acquiring an internship, remaining up-to-date with paperwork requirements and completing all course deliverables according to established due dates ARE YOUR
RESPONSIBILITIES. You should therefore be proactive in acquiring internships and in completing all degree requirements. If you are unable to meet these obligations for any reason, you are expected to notify both your faculty advisor and the Internship Director. You will be made aware of any significant updates to the guidelines, policies & procedures via the Internships and Career Services Listserv. It is your responsibility to remain up-to-date on all policies and procedures related to the internship program. Please note that receiving an “Unsatisfactory” (U) for your internship can automatically trigger dismissal from degree candidacy.

Work Hour Restrictions
Full-time SUNY students can work a maximum of 20 hours per week (50% FTE) during the academic year. Students who have state appointments for less than 50% FTE can have a concurrent RF appointment, as long as the combined FTE does not exceed 50%. For example, a graduate assistant may be working 10 hours per week as a state appointee (25% FTE) and (s)he is then eligible for an RF appointment for up to 10 hours per week (25% FTE).

Professional Conduct
Unfortunately, it is not an uncommon situation to learn from a mentor that a student is repeatedly late, falling asleep, making personal phone calls during work time, dressing unprofessionally, spending time on Facebook, or playing games on the computer while at his/her internship. Poor professional conduct is a negative reflection on you, your faculty advisor, your department, the Dean’s Office, and the School as a whole. Tremendous effort goes into maintaining relationships with mentors and host organizations. You should remain conscious of this while representing this School to your host organization. So, for the vast majority, this goes without saying, however, you should consider it said: All students are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times during the internship experience. Should you have any questions concerning professional dress or behavior, please contact the Internship Director directly.

At your internship, dress should be professional based on organizational policies, as should all communication with mentors, faculty advisors and Dean’s Office staff. Time and attendance policies of the host organization must be followed. If your mentor does not provide you with details regarding these policies, please ask so you know to what you are being held accountable. Your mentor is responsible for verifying that you complete the appropriate number of project hours, 240 hours for each 3 credits of internship. Should your mentor or advisor express concern regarding your time and attendance, you will be required to submit weekly time sheets, with both your faculty advisor’s and mentor’s signatures to the Dean’s Office. The MPH, MS and DrPH degrees are professional degree programs. As a student representative of these programs, you are expected to act, dress and communicate with others in a professional manner.

Requesting Time Off
If your personal or academic schedule requires you to take time off (hours or days) from your internship, please clear this with your internship mentor prior to taking the time off. If the duration of time is greater than a week, you must consult with the Internship Director.

**Internship Funding**
Many of the internships offered through the School of Public Health Internship Program have associated funding or fellowships; others do not. Please keep in mind that valuable experiences are obtained whether the internship is funded or unfunded. There are several categories of funding for internships:
1) SPH Internship Fellowship Awards through MCH, PHLOT or OPWDD; 2) Agency Funded; and 3) Unfunded.

1. **SPH Internship Fellowship Awards:** Current School of Public Health students in good academic standing enrolled in a MPH, DrPH or MS degree and completing a credit-bearing internship or placement may be awarded an SPH Internship Fellowship. The SPH Internship Fellowship is completed as part of the academic program. Sponsored by specific state agencies and local health departments, candidates will need to possess the skill set established by the sponsoring agency. The SPH Internship Fellowship award is granted to eligible students to assist with the cost of tuition, fees and/or travel and living expenses associated with the completion of the internship.

While subject to change, students selected for these positions and completing them for academic credit will receive $2500 for a 3-credit (240 hour) internship or $5000 for a 6-credit (480 hour internship, summer only). This funding is applied directly to the student’s account to assist with the cost of tuition, fees, and/or travel and living expenses associated with the completion of the internship. Paperwork is completed with the Internships & Career Services Office at SPH.

- **Maternal and Child Health Block Grant (MCH) Internship Fellowship:**
  All Maternal and Child Health Block Grant (MCH) Internship Fellowships are selected via a process internal to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). Once projects are selected, position descriptions are submitted to the Internship Director for posting (via Moodle) and student viewing. Typically, DOH provides 10 to 15 MCH positions during the fall and spring semesters and 6 to 10 positions during the summer session. Positions providing SPH Internship Fellowships through MCH are clearly labeled during the internship process.

- **Public Health Leaders of Tomorrow (PHLOT) Internship Fellowship:**
  Internship Fellowships are provided through the Public Health Leaders of Tomorrow Program (PHLOT) for students completing internships at any local health department (LHD) throughout NYS. PHLOT also provides Internship Fellowships for practice-based positions within the New York State Department of Health where alternative funding is not available. In order to be
eligible for PHLOT funding, students must be currently enrolled in the MPH, MS, or DrPH program, and be in good academic standing. Positions providing SPH Internship Fellowships through PHLOT are clearly labeled during the internship process.

- **Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) Internship Fellowship:**
  All Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) Internship Fellowships are selected via a process internal to the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (NYSOPWDD). Once projects are selected, position descriptions are submitted to the Internship Director for posting (via Moodle) and student viewing. Typically, OPWDD provides 2 to 4 positions during the fall and spring semesters and up to 6 positions during the summer semester. Positions providing SPH Internship Fellowships through OPWDD are clearly labeled during the internship process.

2. **Agency Funded Internships:**
The process to obtain an agency-funded internship is the same as obtaining any other type of internship. While the amount of funding associated with agency-funded internships is typically the same as the amount for an SPH Internship Fellowship Award, it can sometimes vary slightly and all of the paperwork regarding this funding is handled through the agency directly, not through SPH. Internships that provide agency funding are clearly labeled during the internship process.

3. **Unfunded Internships**
While many internships and field placements are funded, this is not a guarantee. As a graduate student, it may not be an option for you to take part in an unfunded internship. However, please keep in mind that an unfunded experience is equally as valuable as a funded one; both provide useful and significant opportunities and experiences for your future career. Please consider your interests and career goals when identifying an internship, do not choose a position simply because it is funded.

**SPH Internship & Field Placement Program: The Process**
All data pertaining to MPH Internships is maintained with the Internship Director in the SPH Dean’s Office. This coordinated approach is critical to managing the School’s funding programs and to providing accurate information for CEPH reporting requirements. If you are working to establish a placement outside of those listed through the School, you are responsible for keeping the Internship Director informed of the situation. Competition for acquiring internships may be high. You are therefore encouraged to research a variety of opportunities independently, particularly if you are seeking a summer placement outside of the Capital District area. Please note that students interested in gaining international experience should meet with the Director of the Center for Global Health here at the School of Public Health.

The general process for applying for positions is as follows:
1. **Sign-up**
   Each semester, students planning to participate in an internship the following semester are asked to sign-up with the Internship & Career Services Office. This request is sent out to students via the Internships and Career Services Listserv. Failing to sign up to participate may exclude you from receiving relevant information about the Internship Program and upcoming deadlines.

2. **Develop and submit your resume**
   A comprehensive resume workshop, conducted by the UAlbany Career Services Center is typically offered during first-year seminar to provide guidance in developing an appropriate resume well in advance of the resume submission deadline. Students are strongly encouraged to complete a resume critique either at the Career Services Center on the Main Campus or with the Career Services Office at SPH. Resumes are not automatically critiqued as part of the internship process.

   Student resumes are submitted electronically, in PDF format, to the Internships & Career Services Office. Your resume is your application for the Internship Program and is later sent to prospective internship mentors during the internship process.

3. **Review posted Internship opportunities**
   Each semester, the SPH Internship Program secures and provides opportunities exclusively for eligible students at SPH. These opportunities are posted for student viewing online. Eligible students that signed up to participate in the Internship Program will receive a notice via the Internships & Career Services listserv and to their Albany.edu email address notifying them that positions are available for viewing.

4. **‘Top 5’ Selection**
   Students review all available internship postings and select the ‘Top 5’ positions to which they would most like to apply. By an established deadline, these ‘Top 5’ choices will be submitted to the Internship & Career Services Office. Students should share and discuss ‘Top 5’ selections with their faculty advisor. More information regarding how and when to submit ‘Top 5’ selections will be provided to students during the internship process.

5. **Resume Submission**
   After submission of the Top 5, the Internship & Career Services Office will forward resumes to prospective internship mentors for review. All eligible student resumes are forwarded at the same time. Failure to submit ‘Top 5’ selections by the provided deadline may hinder a student’s ability to secure an internship through this process.
Students should not contact mentors directly for positions posted through the Internship Office at this point in the process unless specifically instructed to do so by Internship Director. Eligibility to participate in the SPH Internship & Field Placement Program may be jeopardized.

6. Interview Period
Upon receipt of student resumes, mentors contact students directly to set up interviews for the position. This interview period typically lasts for several weeks. Mentors are encouraged to interview all applicants, but they are not required to. Mentors can make an offer at any time during the interview process; they do not need to wait until the final decision date. We do ask that mentors refrain from offering the position during the course of the interview as it places students in an uncomfortable position.

After interviewing candidates of interest and identifying a match for their internship, mentors will make an offer to the student and notify the Internship Director of their selection. Once a student accepts a position, mentors are also encouraged to inform students that did not get the position that it has been filled.

7. Internship Match
Upon receiving an offer, students may accept or decline the offer at hand. Students are asked to take just a couple of days to accept or decline an offer and to be courteous throughout the interview process. If you have more than one offer extended to you, please accept one in a timely manner so that the other positions can be opened back up to other students. In order for the process to run smoothly and efficiently, students should not wait for any extended amount of time to get back to a mentor – a couple of days is sufficient. In addition, once you've accepted a position, it is most appropriate to turn down any additional interviews if they are offered and to cancel any that are already scheduled.

If a student has not received any offers close to the final decision date, they should speak with the Internship Director about their options. Once students have secured an internship, they should inform the Internship Director as soon as possible.

8. Internship and Placement Registration
Once an internship is secured, the next step is to complete a Registration Form and Learning Contract to formally register for the internship or field placement with the University at Albany. More information on the Registration Form and Learning Contract can be found below. You must be registered for your internship or field placement during the semester in which you are completing it. Students registering for MPH Internships register with the Internships & Career Services Office. Students registering for MS Field Placements will register with the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Department.
Course Grades

Internships and Field Placements are graded on a “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory” basis. Internship and placements grades are determined by the site mentor, faculty advisor, and the Internship Director. Grades cannot be determined until all paperwork has been completed, signed, and submitted. A complete set of paperwork consists of: the Registration Form and Learning Contract, One-Month Review Form, Mentor Evaluation Form, Oral Presentation Evaluation Form, Final Internship Report and Final Report Approval Form, and Confidential Student Evaluation Form, all described in detail below.

An incomplete or an “I” will be distributed for an internship or placement when a student has not completed the internship by the deadline established by the Internships and Career Services Office. Each semester, the deadline for final paperwork falls on the final day of exams as determined by the University at Albany’s academic calendar. Upon completion of all requirements (hour commitment and all paperwork requirements), the incomplete grade can be rectified. A student may not begin an additional internship if a grade of “I” exists on their record.

Per the University at Albany Graduate Student Handbook, failing an internship (receiving an “Unsatisfactory” or “U”) results in automatic dismissal from degree candidacy:

The candidacy of graduate students who receive a grade of U in a required seminar or research course, in a practicum, student teaching course, internship, field course or similar application course, on a thesis, or in a dissertation course, is terminated unless an exception is recommended for compelling reasons by their department or school, and they may not register for further study unless they are later reinstated. Under certain conditions, and with the recommendations of the student's major department, such a student may apply to the Dean of Graduate Studies for reinstatement, but ordinarily at least one session must intervene before a reinstatement. ([http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements_degree.htm#graduate_credit](http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements_degree.htm#graduate_credit))

In light of this policy, it is in your best interest to notify and involve the Internship Director and your faculty advisor at the first signs of difficulties. Your best option is ALWAYS to address problems in a timely manner.

Internship & Field Placement Paperwork Requirements

In order to receive academic credit, MPH and MS students must register the internship or field placement experience with the University at Albany MyUAlbany system and successfully complete all course requirements by the due dates established. MPH students will register their internship through the Office of Internship & Career Services. MS students must register with their department. Instructions will be provided to students by the Internship Director with regard to obtaining class permission numbers for registering internships with the University. Reminders will be sent to students.
regarding paperwork requirements and due dates; however, it is YOUR responsibility to comply with due dates as expected for any other graduate course. This includes ensuring that all paperwork is provided to the site mentor and faculty advisor during the internship and that all original, signed paperwork is turned in to the Internship Director’s office at the appropriate times during the course of the internship. Instructions are provided on each individual form. In addition, you should supply copies of all paperwork to the Assistant to the Chair of your Department. The Internship and Career Services Office is unable to provide you with photocopying services so please be prepared with copies prior to handing your paperwork. All forms can be accessed on the Moodle page and on the SPH website.

**Paperwork requirements for student-developed internships:**

*Please note: For students developing your own internship, all of the forms below are required. If you are developing the project with the aid of a prospective mentor, you should use the Registration Form and Learning Contract as a guide in developing your project. If you are an MPH student, please be sure to include a description of the MPH Core Competencies as noted above in the ‘Developing Your Own Internship or Field Placement’ section.*

**Registration Form and Learning Contract:** The student, mentor, and Internship Director are required to sign the Registration Form prior to the start of the internship or field placement. The Registration Form and Learning Contract serves as the agreement between student, mentor, and SPH and is required to obtain a class permission number to formally register for the internship with the University. Students have to be registered for the internship or placement prior to the first day on site. University registration policies apply for internship and field placement registration. The Registration Form/Learning Contract provides a basis for the mentor's evaluation of the student, your evaluation of the internship experience, and the monitoring of student progress. Substantial changes to the project or to the terms of the contract should be amended with a revised project description if warranted. All project descriptions should include an outline of the following:

- Project Background and Goals;
- Student’s Role in Project;
- Expected Student Outcomes and Deliverables;
- Project Duration and Scheduling Considerations; and,
- Plan for achieving a basic application of the MPH Internship Interdisciplinary/Cross-cutting Competencies. (Several skills in most competency areas should be addressed.) MS Students do not need to address the MPH Competencies.

**One-Month Review:** After about a month’s time, students, mentors, and faculty advisors are asked to evaluate the progress of the internship/placement. The One-Month Review form must be completed on the basis of a formal One-Month Review meeting between the student, mentor, and faculty advisor. The student should facilitate scheduling of the One-Month Review by contacting both their mentor and
faculty advisor to find a common meeting time around the 4-5 week mark of the internship/placement. This review process is critical to ensuring that the student is successfully progressing toward achieving the goals of the placement and that all parties are satisfied thus far. The one-month review addresses how the internship has progressed to date, how often meetings are held, if there are any problems within the internship, and if any significant changes to the original project description have been made. At this time, any changes to the original internship plan can be resolved and should be described with an amended project description. Any problems with the internship should be identified at this time so that a reasonable solution can be determined within a time frame that does not detriment the student’s project or completion of the internship. Any issues that arise from the completion of the one-month review will be addressed with the Internship Director and the faculty advisor. If issues arise prior to the one-month review period, please schedule a time to meet with the Internship Director as soon as possible.

**Oral Presentation:** An oral presentation is required for each internship of field placement. The oral presentation is the student’s opportunity to share the highlights of their internship experience with the mentor, faculty advisor and host organization colleagues. Students present their internship projects within their host organization for their mentor and any other staff/colleagues that they worked with during their project. Please note that MS students have to complete their oral presentation at SPH. Students presenting are expected to provide a professional and engaging discussion of the major competencies and achievements, activities, and results of his/her internship or placement experience. Power point slides should be provided to your faculty advisor one week prior to your scheduled presentation for approval. If unable to make it in-person, faculty advisors should also be invited to attend or listen via teleconference to the presentation. The date and evaluation of your formal presentation is incorporated into the Mentor Evaluation. Student participation in SPH Annual Student Poster Day, held during the spring semester, can replace and fulfill the oral presentation requirement for one internship.

The oral presentation should follow the format described below, and is limited to 20 minutes: 15 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for a question and answer period. The time limit should be enforced by the site mentor. Students are advised to rehearse their presentation beforehand to ensure that the timing is appropriate.

The presentation should incorporate the following information:

- Objective(s) of the internship
- Method(s) used to achieve the objective(s)
- Results of the internship
- Conclusions and recommendations
- An indication of any coursework that was particularly useful to you in completing the internship.
• A demonstrated knowledge of public health principles and practice and how they applied to the internship experience.
• A discussion of the primary internship competency areas, how they were attained, and the professional and academic value of the internship experience.

In addition to the above, the student’s oral presentation will be evaluated on several criteria including the following:

• Student’s description of the objectives of the project
• Student’s speaking style and use of audiovisual materials
• Organization and clarity of the presentation
• Student’s satisfactory response to questions from the audience
• Student’s adherence to guidelines for the timing of the presentation

Students doing internships or placements in laboratories or research institutions should pay special attention to describing the public health implications of the project. The student will receive a summary of comments and an overall rating of the presentation. The oral presentation evaluation form, along with all other forms, is located on Moodle.

Final Report: A final report is required for each internship and placement. The final report serves to summarize the experience and highlight how the internship or placement facilitated the development of new skills or further honed MPH competencies or MS objectives. The site mentor is responsible for approving the final written report. You should submit a draft of your final paper to your mentor for review allowing for ample time before the due date to receive feedback and make necessary revisions. After obtaining mentor approval, submit the paper to your faculty advisor for review and sign-off. Faculty advisors may provide feedback and request additional revisions. It is in your best interest to submit the document to your faculty advisor well in advance of the due date.

MPH internships are presented to the Council on Education in Public Health as the capstone experience of the MPH degree program. As such, the final internship paper should be held to this high standard. **The final paper is required in addition to any final deliverables involved in the internship position (including papers being submitted for publication).** Papers should, on average, be approximately 8 to 10 pages in length, double-spaced.

The final report should discuss the following:

1. The organizational unit where the internship or placement took place, its primary mission, and its relationship to the overall organizational structure (explanation of services provided, program/public health objectives, populations targeted etc.).
2. Specific duties performed within the context of the organization and the field of public health.

3. Assigned projects (outline of the issue, methods used to define and address the problem, results, discussion and recommendations). Copies of relevant materials developed during the field placement, e.g., draft or final reports, surveys, questionnaires, etc. should be attached.

4. For MPH students- Skills applied during the experience in the context of the MPH Internship Discipline-specific and Interdisciplinary/Cross-cutting Competencies. For each identified competency, specific examples of how the internship provided an opportunity to attain that objective should be included.

5. Previous coursework and/or professional experience utilized during the experience (also noting additional coursework or skills that would have been helpful).

6. Self-assessment of performance and overall contributions made to the organization.

7. Analysis of ways in which the internship experience helped to clarify or alter career goals.

**Mentor Evaluation:** This is completed by your mentor and reviewed with you and your faculty advisor for signature and submission. Your mentor will provide a final grade based on your performance throughout the internship or placement experience. While the mentor’s evaluation is considered to be the main source of input for assigning a passing or failing grade, the Internship Director and your faculty advisor may also contribute to the decision. The final report also contributes to the overall course grade as described above.

**Confidential Student Evaluation:** The evaluation is an opportunity for you to provide an open and honest assessment of your experience, mentor, and your faculty advisor. Feedback provided in this evaluation will remain confidential and this form is turned in directly to the Internships Office. Unlike all other paperwork, this form is not turned in to your Department. Your feedback may be used to guide development of future internship and placement sites but will remain anonymous. Your comments should reflect thoughtful consideration of your experience and relevant criticisms or shortcomings of the experience should be presented in a constructive manner.

**Internship Paperwork Due Dates**

*Due dates are subject to change* based on the semester. Students are made aware of when paperwork is due via the Internships and Career Services Listserv. The following table is an *example* of a semester
internship schedule. Typically, all final paperwork is due on the last day of final exams as determined by the University at Albany’s academic calendar.

**Example MPH Internship Paperwork Due Dates**
(Dates below are for example purposes only; Students will be notified of due dates for each semester via the Internships and Career Services listserv)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration Form and Learning Contract due to Internship Director in Dean’s Office</td>
<td>Prior to internship/placement start date and late registration date</td>
<td>Prior to internship/placement start date and late registration date</td>
<td>Prior to internship/placement start date and late registration date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Month Review Form due to Internship Director in Dean’s Office</td>
<td>4-6 weeks after start date;</td>
<td>4-6 weeks after start date</td>
<td>4-6 weeks after start date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report and Mentor Evaluation with Mentor’s signatures due to Advisor</td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report, Oral Presentation, Mentor Evaluation &amp; Student Evaluation Forms with final signatures due to Internship Director in Dean’s Office. Oral presentation should also be completed and evaluated by this date.</td>
<td>Last Day of Final Exams</td>
<td>Last Day of Final Exams</td>
<td>Last Day of Final Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPH Student Poster Day</td>
<td>Annually held in April</td>
<td>Annually held in April</td>
<td>Annually held in April</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Student Poster Day**: Student Poster Day is a **degree** requirement for all MPH students. Students are required to present one internship in a poster format during the SPH Annual Student Poster Day which occurs annually in April, typically on the third or fourth Friday of the month. Poster Abstract submission and all Poster Day details are managed by the Student Affairs Office.

**Poster Day Requirement**: All MPH students are required to satisfactorily participate in the annual School of Public Health Student Poster Day. While not formally a component of the internship course grade, posters are based on internship and placement experiences and degree clearance is contingent on meeting this requirement. Posters should be based on credit-bearing internship experience obtained while enrolled in the MPH program. Non-credit internships may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Posters may also be based on an obtained and approved waiver experience. All August graduates of the program have to fulfill this requirement. In rare cases, December graduates of the program may have this requirement waived. This requirement also applies for MI and Coverdell Fellow students. Please contact the Internship Director for more information.

- Participation in Poster Day can also replace the oral presentation requirement for the internship that is being presented in poster format.
- For the Poster Day Event, your faculty advisor is required to attend and complete a written evaluation (form provided at event) of the students poster and presentation of the experience. Please inform your faculty advisor if you will be presenting a poster at Poster Day well in advance of the event.
- Internship and placement mentors should be invited and are strongly encouraged to attend as it provides students with the opportunity to present to public health practitioners in addition to faculty and peers.

For MPH students, posters should demonstrate the achievement of the MPH Internship Discipline-specific and Interdisciplinary/Cross-cutting Competencies and comprehension of the public health relevance of the internship. You are required to submit your abstract to your internship mentor for approval prior to submitting to the Student Affair’s Office for Poster Day. All information about abstract submission and deadlines will be presented to students via the Student Affairs Office. Please verify that your mentor does not have any additional requests in relation to reviewing your poster well in advance of the event.
# MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH) COMPETENCIES

The master of public health (MPH) curriculum in graduate schools and programs of public health is organized around the five core disciplines of public health: Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental Health Science, Health Policy and Management, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Knowledge and skills in these disciplines equip our graduates to analyze and consider solutions to public health problems at the community, institutional, and societal levels. Below are the competencies outlined by the Association of the Schools of Public Health, and adopted by CEPH, the accrediting body for the University at Albany School of Public Health. **Each SPH student should be able to exhibit the competencies in their designated concentration area upon graduation.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCENTRATION AREA</th>
<th>COMPETENCIES/SKILLS</th>
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</table>
| **BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES** *(Public Health Biology)* | 1. Specify the role of the immune system in population health.  
   2. Describe how behavior alters human biology.  
   3. Identify the ethical, social and legal issues implied by public health biology.  
   4. Explain the biological and molecular basis of public health.  
   5. Explain the role of biology in the ecological model of population-based health.  
   6. Explain how genetics and genomics affect disease processes and public health policy and practice.  
   7. Articulate how biological, chemical and physical agents affect human health.  
   8. Apply biological principles to development and implementation of disease prevention, control, or management programs.  
   9. Apply evidence-based biological and molecular concepts to inform public health laws, policies, and regulations.  
  10. Integrate general biological and molecular concepts into public health. |
| **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH** | 1. Describe the direct and indirect human, ecological and safety effects of major environmental and occupational agents.  
   2. Describe genetic, physiologic and psychosocial factors that affect susceptibility to adverse health outcomes following exposure to environmental hazards.  
   3. Describe federal and state regulatory programs, guidelines and authorities that control environmental health issues.  
   4. Specify current environmental risk assessment methods.  
   5. Specify approaches for assessing, preventing and controlling environmental hazards that pose risks to human health and safety.  
   6. Explain the general mechanisms of toxicity in eliciting a toxic response to various environmental exposures.  
   7. Discuss various risk management & risk communication approaches in relation to issues of environmental justice and equity.  
   8. Develop a testable model of environmental insult. |
| EPIDEMIOLOGY | 1. Identify key sources of data for epidemiologic purposes.  
2. Identify the principles and limitations of public health screening programs.  
3. Describe a public health problem in terms of magnitude, person, time and place.  
4. Explain the importance of epidemiology for informing scientific, ethical, economic and political discussion of health issues.  
5. Comprehend basic ethical and legal principles pertaining to the collection, maintenance, use and dissemination of epidemiologic data.  
6. Apply the basic terminology and definitions of epidemiology.  
7. Calculate basic epidemiology measures.  
8. Communicate epidemiologic information to lay and professional audiences.  
9. Draw appropriate inferences from epidemiologic data.  
10. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of epidemiologic reports. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH POLICY &amp; MANAGEMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A multi-disciplinary field of inquiry &amp; practice concerned with the delivery, quality &amp; costs of health care for individuals &amp; populations, with both a managerial and a policy concern with the structure, process and outcomes of health services including the costs, financing, organization, outcomes &amp; accessibility of care.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the main components and issues of the organization, financing and delivery of health services and public health systems in the U.S.</td>
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<td>2. Describe the legal and ethical basis for public health and health services.</td>
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<td>3. Explain methods of ensuring community health safety and preparedness.</td>
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<td>4. Discuss the policy process for improving the health status of populations.</td>
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<td>5. Apply the principles of program planning, development, budgeting, management and evaluation in organizational and community initiatives.</td>
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<td>6. Apply principles of strategic planning and marketing to public health.</td>
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<td>7. Apply quality and performance improvement concepts to address organizational performance issues.</td>
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<td>8. Apply ‘systems thinking’ for resolving organizational problems.</td>
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<td>9. Communicate health policy and management issues using appropriate channels and technologies.</td>
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<td>10. Demonstrate leadership skills for building partnerships.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL BEHAVIOR &amp; COMMUNITY HEALTH</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Addresses the behavioral, social and cultural factors related to individual and population health and health disparities over the life course. Research and practice in this area contributes to the development, administration and evaluation of programs and policies in public health and health services to promote and sustain healthy environments and healthy lives for individuals and populations.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify basic theories, concepts and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines used in public health research and practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Identify the causes of social and behavioral factors that affect health of individuals and populations.</td>
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<td>3. Identify individual, organizational and community concerns, assets, resources and deficits for social and behavioral science interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Identify critical stakeholders for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Describe steps and procedures for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Describe the role of social and community factors in both the onset and solution of public health problems.</td>
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<td>7. Describe the merits of social and behavioral science interventions and policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Apply the evidence-based approaches in the development and evaluation of social and behavioral science interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Apply ethical principles to public health program planning, implementation and evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Specify multiple targets and levels of intervention for social and behavioral science programs and/or policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BIOSTATISTICS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The development and application of statistical reasoning and methods in addressing, analyzing and solving problems in public health; health care; and biomedical, clinical and population based research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Describe the roles biostatistics serves in the discipline of public health.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Describe basic concepts of probability, random variation and commonly used statistical probability distributions.</td>
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<td>3. Describe preferred methodological alternatives to commonly used statistical methods when assumptions are not met.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Distinguish among the different measurement scales and the implications for selection of statistical methods to be used based on these assumptions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Apply descriptive techniques commonly used to summarize public health data.</td>
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<td>7. Apply descriptive &amp; inferential methodologies according to the type of study design for answering a particular research question.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Apply basic informatics techniques with vital statistics and public health records in the description of public health characteristics and in public health research and evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Interpret results of statistical analyses found in public health studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Develop written &amp; oral presentations based on statistical analyses for both public health professionals and educated lay audiences.</td>
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MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH) COMPETENCIES
Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cutting Competencies

The interdisciplinary/cross-cutting competencies in the six initial domains selected for the ASPH model – Communication and Informatics, Diversity and Culture, Leadership, Professionalism, Program Planning, and Systems Thinking – have become increasingly important to effective public health practice and, thus, are included, along with the five discipline-specific competency domains, in this model. Below are the interdisciplinary/cross-cutting competencies outlined by the Association of the Schools of Public Health, and adopted by CEPH, the accrediting body for the University at Albany School of Public Health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCENTRATION AREA</th>
<th>COMPETENCIES/SKILLS</th>
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</table>
| **COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATICS** | 1. Describe how the public health information infrastructure is used to collect, process, maintain, and disseminate data.  
2. Describe how societal, organizational, and individual factors influence and are influenced by public health communications.  
3. Discuss the influences of social, organizational and individual factors on the use of information technology by end users.  
4. Apply theory and strategy-based communication principles across different settings and audiences.  
5. Apply legal and ethical principles to the use of information technology and resources in public health settings.  
6. Collaborate with communication and informatics specialists in the process of design, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs.  
7. Demonstrate effective written and oral skills for communicating with different audiences in the context of professional public health activities.  
8. Use information technology to access, evaluate, and interpret public health data.  
9. Use informatics methods and resources as strategic tools to promote public health.  
10. Use informatics and communication methods to advocate for community public health programs and policies. |

The ability to collect, manage and organize data to produce information and meaning that is exchanged by use of signs and symbols; to gather, process, and present information to different audiences in-person, through information technologies, or through media channels; and to strategically design the information and knowledge exchange process to achieve specific objectives.
### DIVERSITY AND CULTURE

The ability to interact with both diverse individuals and communities to produce or impact an intended public health outcome.

1. Describe the roles of history, power, privilege and structural inequality in producing health disparities.
2. Explain how professional ethics and practices relate to equity and accountability in diverse community settings.
3. Explain why cultural competence alone cannot address health disparity.
4. Discuss the importance and characteristics of a sustainable diverse public health workforce.
5. Use the basic concepts and skills involved in culturally appropriate community engagement and empowerment with diverse communities.
6. Apply the principles of community-based participatory research to improve health in diverse populations.
7. Differentiate among availability, acceptability, and accessibility of health care across diverse populations.
8. Differentiate between linguistic competence, cultural competency, and health literacy in public health practice.
9. Cite examples of situations where consideration of culture-specific needs resulted in a more effective modification or adaptation of a health intervention.
10. Develop public health programs and strategies responsive to the diverse cultural values and traditions of the communities being served.

### LEADERSHIP

The ability to create and communicate a shared vision for a changing future; champion solutions to organizational and community challenges; and energize commitment to goals.

1. Describe the attributes of leadership in public health.
2. Describe alternative strategies for collaboration and partnership among organizations, focused on public health goals.
3. Articulate an achievable mission, set of core values, and vision.
4. Engage in dialogue and learning from others to advance public health goals.
5. Demonstrate team building, negotiation, and conflict management skills.
6. Demonstrate transparency, integrity, and honesty in all actions.
7. Use collaborative methods for achieving organizational and community health goals.
8. Apply social justice and human rights principles when addressing community needs.
9. Develop strategies to motivate others for collaborative problem solving, decision-making, and evaluation.
### PROFESSIONALISM

**The ability to demonstrate ethical choices, values and professional practices implicit in public health decisions; consider the effect of choices on community stewardship, equity, social justice and accountability; and to commit to personal and institutional development.**

1. Discuss sentinel events in the history and development of the public health profession and their relevance for practice in the field.
2. Apply basic principles of ethical analysis (e.g. the Public Health Code of Ethics, human rights framework, other moral theories) to issues of public health practice and policy.
3. Apply evidence-based principles and the scientific knowledge base to critical evaluation and decision-making in public health.
4. Apply the core functions of assessment, policy development, and assurance in the analysis of public health problems and their solutions.
5. Promote high standards of personal and organizational integrity, compassion, honesty and respect for all people.
6. Analyze determinants of health and disease using an ecological framework.
7. Analyze the potential impacts of legal and regulatory environments on the conduct of ethical public health research and practice.
8. Distinguish between population and individual ethical considerations in relation to the benefits, costs, and burdens of public health programs.
9. Embrace a definition of public health that captures the unique characteristics of the field (e.g., population-focused, community-oriented, prevention-motivated and rooted in social justice) and how these contribute to professional practice.
10. Appreciate the importance of working collaboratively with diverse communities and constituencies (e.g. researchers, practitioners, agencies and organizations).
11. Value commitment to lifelong learning and professional service including active participation in professional organizations.

### PROGRAM PLANNING

**The ability to plan for the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of strategies to improve individual and community health.**

1. Describe how social, behavioral, environmental, and biological factors contribute to specific individual and community health outcomes.
2. Describe the tasks necessary to assure that program implementation occurs as intended.
3. Explain how the findings of a program evaluation can be used.
4. Explain the contribution of logic models in program development, implementation, and evaluation.
5. Differentiate among goals, measurable objectives, related activities, and expected outcomes for a public health program.
6. Differentiate the purposes of formative, process, and outcome evaluation.
7. Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods in relation to their strengths, limitations, and appropriate uses, and emphases on reliability and validity.
8. Prepare a program budget with justification.
9. In collaboration with others, prioritize individual, organizational, and community concerns and resources for public health programs.
10. Assess evaluation reports in relation to their quality, utility, and impact on public health.

### SYSTEMS THINKING

1. Identify characteristics of a system.
2. Identify unintended consequences produced by changes made to a public health system.
3. Provide examples of feedback loops and "stocks and flows" within a public health system.
4. Explain how systems (e.g. individuals, social networks, organizations, and communities) may be viewed as systems within systems in the analysis of public health problems.
5. Explain how systems models can be tested and validated.
6. Explain how the contexts of gender, race, poverty, history, migration, and culture are important in the design of interventions within public health systems.
7. Illustrate how changes in public health systems (including input, processes, and output) can be measured.
8. Analyze inter-relationships among systems that influence the quality of life of people in their communities.
9. Analyze the effects of political, social and economic policies on public health systems at the local, state, national and international levels.
10. Analyze the impact of global trends and interdependencies on public health related problems and systems.
11. Assess strengths and weaknesses of applying the systems approach to public health problems.

The ability to recognize system level properties that result from dynamic interactions among human and social systems and how they affect the relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and environments.