

School of Public Health and Health Services  
Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics  
PubH 6014.13  
Epidemiology and Biostatistics Practicum (2 credits)

For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/epibio/practicum.cfm>

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MPH students are required to demonstrate proficiency in the application of the skills they acquire during their academic programs through the **Practicum** (PubH 6014.13) and the **Culminating Experience** (PubH 6015.13).

The **Practicum** is a credit/no credit course which consists of a planned, supervised, and evaluated practice activity in a public health organization. The Practice Activity can consist either of a primary research or surveillance project including data collection and analysis, or a secondary analysis of an existing database. The Practice Activity enables the student to apply new skills in the context of public health, and must not be directly related to the student's day-to-day work. If the student does conduct the Practice Activity at his/her place of employment, this must be a separate activity for which the student is not remunerated.

The **Culminating Experience** is a graded course which consists of four elements that focus on the Practice Activity: (a) Concept Paper, (b) Proposal, (c) Final Report, and (d) Oral Presentation. These elements are described in detail in the Culminating Experience syllabus (PubH 6015.13).

While it is not a requirement, it is possible for students to link the practicum and culminating experience.

### Practicum Prerequisites

#### *Course Prerequisites*

- PubH 6002 Biostatistical Applications for Public Health
- PubH 6003 Principles and Practice of Epidemiology
- PubH 6005 Policy Approaches to Public Health

### *Co-Requisites*

- PubH 6247 Design of Health Studies
- PubH 6249 Use of Stat Packages for Data Management/Data Analysis
- PubH 6261 Epidemiology and Biostatistics Skills Building Seminar

### *Recommended Courses*

- PubH 6004 Environmental and Occupational Health
- PubH 6007 Social and Behavioral Science Methods
- PubH 6252 Advanced Epidemiologic Methods

### *Other prerequisites*

- Students must take the online training courses relating to research with human subjects (CITI) and personal health information (HIPAA) (see SPHHS Student Practicum Guidebook for details).
- Students must have completed the mandatory online SPHHS Practicum Training designed to assist students with preparing for their practicum and professional endeavors (see Practicum handbook for details).
- Students must have participated in the mandatory Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics practicum orientation session.
- Before enrolling in the Practicum, students must choose a site for their Practice Activity.
- If applicable, students must submit IRB paperwork. (See Culminating Experience (PubH 6015.13) syllabus for details).

### *Other co-requisites*

- If students decide to link their practicum and culminating experience, a Concept paper and a Proposal (see Culminating Experience syllabus PubH 6015.13 for details) must be completed.

### *Student responsibilities*

1. Students should meet with the Department Practicum Directors mid-way through the MPH program and begin the process of identifying the Practice Activity that will be the focus of their Practicum.
2. Students must participate in the SPHHS Practicum Training session to prepare them for the Practice Activity and should begin to explore the SPHHS Practicum website and other resources for practicum ideas.
3. Once sites, preceptors, and topics are chosen for each student, the Practicum Director assists the students in identifying their GW Faculty Advisor.
4. Students fill out a practicum plan on the SPHHS Practicum website.
5. Once a student has identified a site and a preceptor, has posted a practicum plan on the SPHHS website and had the preceptor review and PD sign off on the plan, s/he can register for the course. This information will be verified by the Assoc. Dean for Student Affairs in order for the registration to be processed.

6. Students are then ready to sign up for the Practicum. Registration for the Practicum course must be completed using a Registration Transaction Form (RTF) and signed by the PD.
7. It is possible to sign up for the Practicum and Culminating Experience at the same time if they are linked. If the two are not linked, the Practicum must come first.
8. As part of the practicum course (PubH 6014.13), students are required to attend the Epidemiology-Biostatistics Skills Building Seminar (PubH 6261.10).
9. Ideally, students should complete the Epidemiology-Biostatistics Skills Building Seminar concurrent with starting the Practice Activity. The Seminar is generally offered in the fall (first half of the semester) and spring (second half of the semester) semesters to accommodate the timing of students' academic programs.
10. Students may decide to link the Practicum and Culminating Experience. Either way, they should plan to meet with the PD and GW Faculty Advisor to discuss their plans once the Practicum is completed.

### Practicum Competencies

Students use the competencies below to develop their Practicum Plan in the SPHHS Practicum Website, by choosing two or three of the competencies that best apply to the chosen public health Practice Activity.

Course Objective – Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Identify and define a public health issue.
2. Develop a plan or proposal to apply the epidemiological principles needed to carry out the chosen public health Practice Activity.
3. Identify the appropriate data analysis methods.
4. Demonstrate competency in data collection.
5. Demonstrate proficiency in constructing and managing databases for epidemiological studies using statistical software, e.g. The SAS <sup>®</sup> System a specific project or endeavor.

### Recommended/Supplemental Texts for the Epidemiology-Biostatistics Skills Building Seminar

Title	Author	Edition
Designing and Conducting Health Surveys	Aday, LA	Second edition, San Francisco, CA; Jossey-Bass; 1996.
Field Epidemiology	Gregg MB, editor	Second Edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2002.

### Methods of Instruction

Lectures	Class Discussions
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	Required Readings/Textbook Recommended/Supplemental Readings	Mock Study Review Session Other : Written Assignments
X	On-site planned, supervised and evaluated practice activity	

### **Key Definitions – Course Participants**

Students – Students work on a practice activity applying skills they have gained from their academic work in epidemiology.

Site Preceptor – The individual in the field who supervises the student’s work and provides input to the GW Faculty Advisor on the student’s performance, through an evaluation.

GW Faculty Advisor – A member of the GW SPHHS Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics faculty who works with the student throughout the process to ensure that the student’s project and work meet Departmental standards. Reviews and approves Practicum documents, including the Practicum Plan.

Practicum Director – Guides student and reviews evaluations to give the final Practicum grade.

### **Methods of Evaluation**

- Students will be evaluated on how well they have accomplished the objectives for their Practice Activity based upon the Department competencies outlined in the Practicum course syllabus by the on-site preceptor and the Practicum Director.
- Evaluations for the Practice Activity will take place at both the midpoint and the end of the Practicum. The student’s on-site Preceptor will be responsible for evaluating the student’s performance, and the student will also evaluate his/her own experience (For more information, please see the SPHHS practicum handbook).

### **Grading Scale**

The Practicum is graded as Credit or No Credit which will be determined by the Practicum Directors with input from the Site Preceptor and the GW Faculty Advisor. The student will receive credit if 70 percent of their scores are acceptable/passable or better on the final Site Preceptor evaluation of the student.

### **Class Policy: Attendance/Participation**

Students will comply with the Practicum plan with respect to attendance at their Practice Activity.

### **Blackboard**

Blackboard will not be used for this course. Instead the SPPHS Practicum website will be the primary site for information about the Practicum.

### **Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics Practicum Resource Page**

In an effort to provide students with additional information and guidance regarding the Practicum and Culminating Experience, the Department has developed a webpage for students completing these required courses. Students are encouraged to review the website materials prior to and during the completion of these courses. The website is available at <http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/epibio/practicum.cfm>

### **SPHHS Practicum Website**

During the Practicum, you will be required to use the SPHHS Practicum Website on a regular basis. All of the required Practicum forms (e.g. Practicum Plan) will be available and must be completed and submitted on this site. In addition, specific departmental materials will be available on the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics Practicum Resource Page website.

### **Academic integrity**

Please review the University's policy on academic integrity, located at [www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html). All graded work must be completed in accordance with The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity.

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. Common examples of academically dishonest behavior include, but are not limited to, the following: cheating; fabrication; plagiarism; falsification and forgery of University academic documents; facilitating academic dishonesty.

### **Students with disabilities**

If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact the Practicum Director to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Disability Support Services Office at 202.994.8250, Suite 242 Marvin Center, <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss>, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.