

Department of Public Health Sciences Field Experience Manual



**New Mexico State University
College of Health and Social Services
Department of Public Health Sciences**

Updated May 2020

Live, Learn and Thrive.™

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Understanding the Field Experience



College of Health and Social Services building, main campus

Understanding the Field Experience

Introduction:

The field experience is a required and integral part of the Bachelor of Public Health (BPH) and Master of Public Health (MPH) degree programs in the NMSU Department of Public Health Sciences. A field experience allows you, the student, the opportunity to apply classroom learning to actual public health problems and solutions. Placements are made, as possible, according to your career goals and location preferences. The field experience should occur in your senior year as a BPH student and after the second semester, or when you've finished approximately one-half of your classes as a MPH student.

The Department of Public Health Sciences' MPH program is accredited by the Council for Education in Public Health (CEPH). This Council requires a field experience component as part of the degree plan.



It is your responsibility to understand the roles, responsibilities, and the established calendar/time line for the field experience.

The field experience is a planned and supervised experience that:

- Is developed by you, the preceptor, and the field experience coordinator;
- Has been **pre-approved** by the field experience coordinator;
- Incorporates measurable objectives that you have developed, based on conversations with your preceptor, which apply to actual public health situations;
- Involves an expected minimum number of contact hours; and
- Is outlined in a field experience agreement, signed by you, your preceptor, and the field experience coordinator, before registering for the field experience class.

Students who must participate

If you are working towards your BPH or MPH, you must complete a Field Experience. For MPH students, this includes those completing the degree face-to-face or on-line, as well as those seeking the dual degrees of Master of Public Health and Master of Social Work.

If you are an undergraduate student pursuing the BPH degree, you must register for PHLS 496 (six credit hours). **The BPH student will complete 250 hours for this 6-credit course.**

If you are a BPH student and you earned your Associate of Applied Science degree in public health, from Doña Ana Community College (DACC), you will **complete 190 hours for this 6-credit course.** The Department acknowledges 60 of the hours earned when you completed the required CHSS 299 - Service Learning Experience in Human and Community Services course through DACC.

If you are a graduate student, pursuing the MPH in either of the concentrations (Health Behavior and Health Promotion [HBHP: formerly Community Health Education] or Health Management, Administration and Policy [HMAP]), you must register for MPH 596 (3 credit course). **The MPH student is to complete 160 hours for this 3-credit course.**

Note that the summer semester is 10 versus 16 weeks in length. The number of required hours does not change during the shorter summer semester. Other time configurations can be negotiated between student, preceptor, and field experience coordinator.

Overall focus: innovative/creative contributions to the field

A field experience allows you the opportunity to apply classroom learning to actual public health problems and solutions. You are encouraged to seek creative field experience placements that allow you to apply skills you have acquired in the classroom setting, to assist a group or community with a public health/education issue, and to promote personal and professional growth. Sites may be at local, regional, national, or international organizations or facilities.

Field Experience objectives:

Through the field experience, students will be able to:

- Integrate public health theory, knowledge, and skills in a community or public health practice setting;
- Experience the “realities” of public health practice – organizational structure, local and organizational politics, program administration, community relationships, and program coordination;
- Complete one large or a few smaller defined projects, in an area of public health practice including core public health functions such as needs assessment, program planning, program evaluation, policy development, educational or advocacy campaign, or applied research project;
- Gain/expand/develop skills and knowledge in an area of interest not covered in depth elsewhere in their educational plan; and
- Demonstrate leadership, teamwork, communication skills, and creativity in public health practice

Linking your field experience to the [Areas of Responsibility, Competencies and Sub-competencies for Health Education Specialists 2020](#) (National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, 2020)

The Eight Areas of Responsibility contain a comprehensive set of Competencies and Sub-competencies defining the role of the health education specialist. These Responsibilities were verified by the 2020 Health Education Specialist Practice Analysis II (HESPA II 2020) project and serve as the basis of the CHES® and MCHES® exam beginning in 2021.

Students should practice as many of the core competencies and responsibilities as possible during their field experience. There are 8 Areas of Responsibility and numerous competencies for Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES).

This link provides a brief clip about what a Certified Health Education Specialist can accomplish: [Health Education Specialists: Promoting a Healthy World](#)

The eight areas of responsibility verified in 2020 include:

- Area I: Assessment of Needs and Capacity
- Area II: Planning
- Area III: Implementation
- Area IV: Evaluation and Research
- Area V: Advocacy
- Area VI: Communication
- Area VII: Leadership and Management
- Area VIII: Ethics and Professionalism

The full listing of 2020 responsibilities and competencies are found here: [NCHEC 2020 Areas of Responsibility](#)

For BPH and MPH students, you are to be addressing only CHES competencies and responsibilities, **not** those pertaining to MCHES (Master CHES). A sample of one student’s goals and objectives is found in Appendix G.

HMAP field experience

For MPH HMAP students, you not need to identify any specific competencies to align with the objectives.

Field experience calendar and deadlines

The calendar which you are to work with in planning your field experience is noted below. Planning should actively begin the semester **prior** to your taking the FE course. The calendar applies to both BPH and MPH students.

Please contact Holly Mata ASAP for Summer & Fall 2020 Field Experience Planning

Semester the class is to be taken	Spring	Summer	Fall
Identify a site and have it approved by Field Experience Coordinator	November 1	April 1 (extended due to COVID – 19)	April 1 (extended)
Develop Field Experience Plan (goals and objectives)	November 30	April 30	April 30
Agreement signed by site preceptor, student, and FE Coordinator prior to registration	December 10	May 10	May 10
Begin work at site (All Summer 2020 Field Experiences virtual)	First day of spring semester	First day of summer semester	First day of fall semester

Ethics involved with the Field Experience

All BPH and MPH students are expected to follow and adhere to the Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health. The Principles appears in Appendix B.

Field Experience Process



Field Experience Process

Create or update your resume:

The field experience is designed to prepare and provide you with practical experience in the field.

- As part of the field experience requirement, you should share a current resume when you interview or when you first initiate contact with your potential preceptor.
- You may include an updated resume in your field experience documents that incorporates the newly acquired skills and completed tasks that were part of your field experience.

Please see Appendix D for additional information and tips for writing an effective resume. Appendix E has interviewing tips to help prepare for the meeting with your potential preceptor.

Identify a site:

It is the student's responsibility to seek out and find a field experience site which aligns with your interests and preferences, **after** speaking with the Department Field Experience Coordinator. The list of field experience sites is always evolving. Contact the Field Experience Coordinator, to discuss site options.

Students may seek out sites that are new to the Department. However, we strongly recommend that you meet in person, by phone, or skype with the field experience coordinator, before seeking out a potential site, to be sure you are aware of all possible opportunities as well as potential time lags or related matters that may be involved with wanting to work with a new site. A sample letter to assist in communicating with potential preceptors, by email, phone, or in person is found in Appendix F.

See the *Frequently Asked Questions* section later in this handbook for more information about finding a site.

Pre-approvals:

The field experience site and preceptor must be *pre-approved*, affiliation agreement in place, and paperwork signed by the field experience coordinator, student, and preceptor before registering and starting to collect hours for the field experience.

Affiliation Agreements:

NMSU requires that affiliation agreements be in place, with organizations outside of NMSU, before students can start to earn any hours for their field experience. Depending on the organization, this can take a few weeks to a few months or more for this process to be accomplished. It is crucial to plan ahead for your field experience when an affiliation agreement needs to be established between NMSU/PHS and the organization.

The establishment of an affiliation agreement is a process that is done within the Department and College; students do not have a role in this process. Until the affiliation agreement is finalized between NMSU and the organization, a student will not be able to start their field experience.

Goals and Objectives:

Once the agency and the preceptor have been identified, you can begin collaborating with your preceptor and the field experience coordinator to develop objectives, responsibilities, and activities for the field experience.

- Goals and objectives are designed as targets enabling the student, preceptor, and field experience coordinator to evaluate and measure new skills, and the knowledge your field experience will provide.
- Objectives must be measurable and include a specific time frame, the conditions, and what will be learned/achieved.
- The student will electronically submit a draft of goals and objectives for review by the field experience coordinator. This process will involve numerous edits between you and the field experience coordinator, primarily via email, until the goals and objectives are measurable and realistic. This takes time, so please *plan ahead*.
- Goals and objectives must be completed and approved before the start of the semester in which the student wishes to register for PHLS 496/MPH596, the field experience courses. Please refer to the semester field experience calendar on Page 8 for specific dates.
- A final copy of the goals and objectives will be included in the field experience materials shared in CANVAS and attached to the field experience agreement.

Please refer to Appendix G for sample goals and objectives.

Confidentiality Policy:

Students will sign a confidentiality policy upon starting their field experience. It will be co-signed by your preceptor and the field experience coordinator. The organization where you are completing your field experience may require you to sign additional policies and statements, in accordance with their intern or volunteer policies. See Appendix C, Confidentiality Policy.

Site Visit:

The student is responsible for setting a time, that works with schedules of your preceptor, the field experience coordinator and you, for the site visit. The purpose is for the field experience coordinator to visit and observe the field experience site and meet key individuals involved with the field experience. This is to occur mid-way through the experience. The field experience coordinator will meet with the student and preceptor to assess the experience and the student's contributions to the project/program to date. If the site is out of state, or out of country, it is the student's responsibility to set up a time for a conference call or Zoom session between the preceptor, student, and field experience coordinator.

Poster presentation:

Upon completion of the field experience hours, each student will develop and submit a poster presentation. Instructions are provided on the course website in Canvas.

- Poster presentations are designed to be professional and will include highlights of the field experience and a summary of projects, results, findings, personal insights, and recommendations.
- Poster presentation opportunity: During the last week of classes, we'll have in-person or zoom meeting presentations of student posters. Your Field Experience Coordinator will provide additional details during the semester.

Other items of importance:

Please be familiar with the procedures for the agency that you have selected. Some may require background checks, immunizations, additional paperwork, or applications from the sponsoring agency. Plan ahead.

- Background checks:* Some agencies may require a full background check. The NM State Police Department and Campus Police offer these services if the agency does not have an individual contract. Students are responsible for costs associated with any background or related checks by the organization.
- Immunizations:* The Campus Health Center provides TB skin tests and Hepatitis B vaccinations and boosters. Contact the Campus Health Center at 575-646-1512 for information, appointments, and additional locations for obtaining all other vaccinations.
- Safety at the field experience site:* It is your responsibility to adhere to any and all safety requirements identified by your field experience site and preceptor(s). This includes, but is not limited to, participating in required safety classes and workshops.

If you observe an unsafe situation, you are to report it to your preceptor(s). If the situation continues, please advise the field experience coordinator. Use common sense when engaging in field experience activities and situations, with vigilance towards your safety and that of the clients, staff, and others.

Preceptor Criteria



Preceptor Criteria

Criteria for a Preceptor

MPH or other advanced degree in the public health field or five year demonstrated experience in public health research, planning, or administration. CHES or MCHES certification is preferred with the BPH students and MPH students with the HBHP (formerly CHE) concentration. Preceptors working with MPH students seeking the HMAP concentration preferably have an advanced degree and substantial time in the field of public health management, administration and/or policy.

Qualities of an Effective Preceptor

The preceptor plays a key role in determining what the student learns. The preceptor serves as a mentor for the student.

Learning for the student is enhanced when the preceptor possesses these characteristics:

- *Professional competence*: The effective preceptor demonstrates proficiency in the professional competencies relevant to their realm of practice.
- *Positive professional identity and ethics*: Enthusiasm about the public health profession, the work setting, and their own achievements and ethics help the preceptor serve as a positive role model.
- *Desire to work with students*: Enthusiasm and a positive attitude toward the preceptor role contribute to a quality experience for both preceptor and student.
- *Time to work with a student*: Effective guidance requires a commitment of time for regular and impromptu planning, consultation, and feedback sessions with a student.
- *Experience*: The preceptor should have at least five years of public health experience and should be familiar with their work environment and issues of professional practice.
- *Networking*: Knowledge of and access to network of public health professionals working throughout the state and region.

Time Requirements

1. Preceptor meets with student at least two (2) times (within 160 or 250 hour time frame) to determine progress and assess support needed.
2. The projects or student work undertaken with the agency should be able to be completed within 160 hours for a MPH student and 250 hours for a BPH student within 16-week semester. Note that the summer semester is 10 versus 16 weeks in length. Other time configurations can be negotiated between student, preceptor and field experience coordinator.

Managing the field experience

Practitioners accept students for many reasons. Some of the reasons may include their desire to: participate in the professional preparation of those who one day will be colleagues; provide quality opportunities for the application of theory into practice; and/or involve students in time specific projects that provide an excellent learning opportunity for students, while assisting the agency to accomplish specific goals. While students can and

usually do provide good work, they are not staff and require periodic assessment of their performance.

1. Before placement begins, or soon thereafter, orient the student to the organization's goals, clients, and staff. It is crucial to set workplace expectations, hours, dress code, etc.
2. Consider the student to be a special projects person who will enrich the programs in the organization. Plan to look for the special skill(s) each one possesses and negotiate projects that match their abilities and the organization's needs.
3. Require the student to manage their time well. Review the student's goals and objectives, to assess if they are working within the established time frames.
4. Schedule time to confer with the student. Expect the student's presence to add to the preceptor's workload.
5. Expect the student's capabilities to become clearer over the course of the placement. Build in flexibility to limit or expand responsibilities over time and to allow the student to maximize learning.
6. Provide a supportive environment in which the student can make mistakes and learn from them.
7. Serve as the mentor, role model, and coach for the student.
8. Contact the Field Experience Coordinator, as necessary, to support you in the precepting role.
9. In all instances, expect the student to justify their approach with evidence-based considerations. Offer alternative points of view if, as a preceptor, you believe other approaches would be helpful.

Roles and Responsibilities



Roles and Responsibilities

Student's roles and responsibilities:

In collaboration with the field experience coordinator, you are responsible for the following:

- i. Participate in identifying a site and potential topic/project/activities based on an area of interest, previous experience, or career interests and goals. The field experience coordinator will help identify opportunities and potential locations. MPH students should have a discussion with their advisor to discuss potential field experience sites and opportunities.
- ii. Identify the potential preceptor within the agency that meets the department qualifications. For BPH and MPH majors, it is preferable that the preceptor hold an advanced degree (ideally an MPH) and be active within the organization in order to qualify as a preceptor. For the MPH HBHP (formerly CHE) student, ideally the preceptor will be CHES/MCHES. For the MPH HMAP student, ideally the preceptor will have health management, administration and/or policy experience. If the potential preceptor does not hold an MPH, alternate advanced degrees are typically acceptable. If the person does not hold an advanced degree, they should have a minimum of 5 years of experience in the position.
- iii. Establish a time to interview with the preceptor and agree upon activities. A student must be prepared to interview with the agency and should consider the following questions before meeting with the preceptor:
 - Have you ever had a field experience student here before? What was the experience and what types of projects did they do?
 - What project(s) did you have in mind for me to work on?
 - What resources will I have to help me achieve the objectives we agree on?
 - I am particularly interested in learning more about _____. Could that occur here? How?

The interview should assist in determining the plan of action, the tasks and activities that you could potentially be involved with and assist with the development of learning objectives.

Note: Please see Appendix E for additional interviewing tips.

- iv. Develop goals and measurable objectives. These must be drafted, revised, and approved by the field experience coordinator, with agreement from the preceptor, before the student can sign up for the class and the field experience begins. Please refer to Appendix G for more detailed information and examples.
- v. Mid-term report: A brief written evaluation of current activities related to the learning objectives is required to be submitted, by the student, to the field experience coordinator. The midterm coversheet is submitted with the written report, with both student and preceptor signatures affixed. This is submitted when approximately half of the hours have been completed (~125 hours for the BPH student and ~80 for the MPH student). Please refer to Appendix J.

- vi. Field Experience Materials: Students will upload examples of their work into CANVAS during the semester. See details in Appendix M.
- vii. Develop and submit a Poster Presentation of the Field Experience

Preceptor's roles and responsibilities

The preceptor facilitates and provides a practical working environment that allows the student to gain exposure to the field of public/community health and health education or health management, administration and policy. The preceptor offers guidance, leadership, and assists the student with his/her learning objectives, career-related, and education goals by managing the following activities:

- Provides technical and administrative oversight;
- Offers general feedback and guidance related to goals and objectives;
- Assists with problem-solving with situations and projects;
- Encourages professionalism by assisting with decision-making abilities and managing office politics;
- Provides opportunities for increasing responsibility by helping the student stay focused towards learning objectives and goals;
- Maintains an open channel of communication;
- Reviews and reports the student's progress;
- Reviews the midterm report and signs off on the Midterm Report coversheet;
- Works to integrate the student with regular staff and through regular meetings;
- Completes written final evaluation; and
- Collaborates with the student, and the field experience coordinator.

Field experience coordinator's roles and responsibilities:

The field experience coordinator provides the general oversight for the field experience and facilitates the following activities:

- Helps to identify potential sites with the student and preceptor being the ones to determine the final site;
- Provides advice to the student about site/agency selection and the development of the field experience plan, goals, and objectives;
- Initiates the affiliation agreement process with the site/agency;
- Conducts site visits and other communication between student, preceptor and the site; and
- Reviews the student's overall progress and evaluates the quality and quantity of the work, reports, presentations, and assigns a final grade based on the agency evaluation, final report, and other evidence of performance.

Field Experience Paperwork



Field Experience Paperwork

There is some essential paperwork which must be completed before, during, and after involvement with the field experience.

Completion of goals and measurable objectives

- i. Before you begin your field experience, meet with the potential preceptor and determine if the site and work to be accomplished is acceptable to both parties. If the site is acceptable to both parties, it is your responsibility to learn, in specific detail, what you will be accomplishing while with the organization.
- ii. Work with the field experience coordinator to develop specific goals and measurable objectives to be accomplished during the field experience.
 - As a guide, for a BPH major, taking PHLS 496 for 6 hours (250 hours with the site), you should develop 3-4 goals and 8-12 measurable objectives.
 - For a MPH major, taking MPH 596 for 3 hours (160 hours with the site), you should develop 2-3 goals and 5-7 measurable objectives.
- iii. Once the goals and objectives have been approved by the field experience coordinator you will be allowed to register for PHLS 496 or MPH 596.

Field Experience Agreement

- i. The Field Experience Agreement must be completed before the field experience begins. The agreement is located at the end of this handbook (Appendix H). There is a different agreement for BPH and MPH students.
- ii. The agreement includes the student's and preceptor's contact information plus the final goals and measurable objectives for the field experience.
- iii. Required signatures include the agency preceptor(s), student, and finally, the field experience coordinator.
- iv. Students may not accumulate hours until the field experience coordinator has signed the agreement.
- v. The original of this document is provided to the field experience coordinator (may be emailed) and is also uploaded in CANVAS.

Confidentiality Policy

- i. The Confidentiality Policy is to be completed and signed by the student, the preceptor and field experience coordinator. The form is available on the home page of the Canvas site for the class and in Appendix C.

Students will upload a copy of this document in CANVAS at the start of their field experience.

Student's Daily Log

Regular attendance and documentation of your efforts at your field experience is required.

- i. You will complete, **every day you work**, a typed log or diary of the following:
 - a. what occurred that day;
 - b. what you accomplished or learned;
 - c. challenges or obstacles you were involved with;

- d. people you met with and/or meetings attended and the purpose of the meetings; and
 - e. hours worked each day (rounding to 15-minute increments).
- Note:** if you work with a client/patient, use only the person's initials, if pertinent, and no other identifying personal information.

ii. An example of a daily log entry may be as follows:

Sept 5 Attended a staff meeting for 1 hour where we discussed the upcoming community health activity the agency is sponsoring. I updated them on my booth and the materials being collected. I made three calls for additional supplies to X organization, Y hospital, and Z clinic, for the health activity but no one was in their office so I left messages to call me back. I did some research online for more information about our health topic, so we have information in Spanish as well as English. I entered more data as we make progress on the evaluation project. 8 a.m. – noon, 1-3 p.m. 6 hrs

iii. It is recommended that each student keeps a running tabulation, at the end of each month, as to how many hours have been worked for that month and to date, so you are always aware of the number of hours you still need to work. All of this documentation will be turned in through CANVAS at the end of the semester.

September worked 80 hours / Total hours worked to date - 100 / Hours remaining = 150

Field Experience Midterm Report

- i. Students will complete the Midterm Field Experience Report. The form is located in Appendix J. It is the same form for both PHLS 496 and MPH 596 students.
- ii. The form is to be completed midway through the field experience (when approximately ½ of the required hours have been completed; ~ 125 hours for BPH students / ~ 80 hours for MPH students).
- iii. You are to report on the progress made towards your goals and objectives accomplished to date (1-2 pages, doubled spaced).
- iv. You, your preceptor, and field experience coordinator will sign this document.
- v. Submit the form and brief report in CANVAS.

If any modifications are indicated, a revised set of goals and objectives will need to be submitted with the form.

Evaluations

Agency & Health Education/Promotion Responsibilities Evaluations of Student

- i. Field Experience Evaluation – a 3-page form to be completed by the Agency Preceptor(s).
- ii. PHLS 496 **or** MPH 596 - Field Experience Preceptor Evaluation, Evaluation relating to Health Education or Health Management, Administration, and Policy Areas of Responsibilities – a 2 or 3-page form to be completed by Agency Preceptor(s).
 - a. It is your responsibility to get the two (2) forms to your preceptor(s). The preceptor can return the completed form to you – to be uploaded in CANVAS – **or** – they can mail, scan and email or fax the completed form to the field experience coordinator.
 - b. **Note:** There are distinct BPH/MPH – HBHP (formerly CHE) forms and MPH HMAP forms on the Canvas site for this course.
 - c. These documents will be uploaded in CANVAS.

Agency & Health Education Responsibilities Evaluations by Student

- i. Agency Evaluation by Student - a five-page form to be completed by you as an evaluation of the site and experience.
- ii. PHLS 496 **or** MPH 596 - Field Experience Student Evaluation, Evaluation relating to Health Education or Health Management, Administration, and Policy Areas of Responsibilities – a 2 or 3-page form to be completed by student.
 - a. Complete these forms and include with your documents uploaded in CANVAS. They may be shared with the agency; this is at your discretion.
Note: There are distinct BPH/MPH – HBHP (formerly CHE) forms and MPH HMAP forms on the Canvas site for this course.
 - b. These documents will be uploaded in CANVAS.

Field Experience documents to be shared with your Field Experience Coordinator through CANVAS:

- i. Field Experience Agreement (original) and a copy of the final revision of the goals and objectives
- ii. Midterm Field Experience Report (original) and 1-2 page, double spaced, report from the student
- iii. Information about the agency – a brief 2-3-page statement, created by you (not cut and pasted from the agency's website), providing an overview of the agency's history, mission, catchment area, priority population served, funding sources, etc.
- iv. Daily log which is to be presented in a typed, professional format, free of typos or grammatical errors. Several days may be presented on one page; do not have each daily log on its own piece of paper.

- v. Major project(s) completed, including supplemental materials, e.g., curriculum and handouts created, surveys developed and disseminated, etc.
- vi. Training attended or special skills acquired.
- vii. Evaluations from you and your preceptor(s). There are four evaluations due, in total, two from your preceptor and two from you.

Frequently Asked Questions



Frequently Asked Questions

When do I begin?

You may register and begin your field experience after you have completed a significant portion of the core program requirements, including the school core courses and specialty track core courses for MPH students. We recommend that your field experience be one of the last courses you take in your degree program.

Refer to *Understanding the Field Experience* section for further details and deadlines.

How do I find a field experience placement?

Finding a field placement is like finding a job. If you are a BPH student, you are responsible for working with and contacting the field experience coordinator, who will assist you with finding a placement. However, there are many people who can help you. Talk with your advisor, other faculty, and other students who have completed their field experience requirement.

MPH students are to work with the field experience coordinator, with guidance from their advisor, in the selection of a site and the subsequent development of your goals and objectives.

In collaboration with the field experience coordinator, identify agencies that are working on health issues that are interesting to you. Explore options throughout the state, region, country or the world. The list of agencies is always evolving, so talk with the field experience coordinator to discuss present sites and possible options.

If there is an agency you are interested in, you may contact them and find out if they would accept student interns or would be open to exploring the possibility. It is key to talk with the field experience coordinator about the feasibility of setting up a new affiliation agreement with a site and the possible time it may take to set up such an agreement.

If interested in working with an established site, contact the field experience coordinator to learn if: 1) the site is accepting students at this time; 2) if the site may already have committed to accept a student(s) for the semester you wish to complete your field experience and/or; 3) if the site is unable to take students at this time.

Does the field experience have to be border health related?

It is not mandatory that the field experience address a US/Mexico border related topic. While there are many unique and challenging health issues and field experiences along the border, BPH and MPH students have completed field experiences across the state and region, at federal and state agencies, and at private organizations throughout the United States and in other countries. You are encouraged to explore the wide range of possibilities and settings that are available

in the health field. However, you must remember all field experience sites must be pre-approved by the field coordinator.

Can I graduate if my field experience is not complete?

NO. You cannot graduate or earn your degree until all documents are completed, approved and all requirements have been met and the grade submitted.

Is the field experience ever waived?

NO. If you have questions or concern please contact the field experience coordinator.

Can I get paid to complete my field experience?

- While it is uncommon, some sites may pay students completing their field experience. Programs such as the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) (<https://www.hacu.net/hacu/default.asp>), the Health Equity Internship Program (<https://asphn.org/health-equity-internship-program/>), and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (<http://cancer.nmsu.edu/>) provide living expenses and/or stipends while students complete their field experience at their designated sites. These placements are competitive. For the above named programs, they have strict deadlines so refer to their websites and be sure that your completed application materials are submitted before their stated deadlines.

Some sites have small budgets to pay a stipend to a student or reimburse them for gas, etc. This is site specific and is not common. If a reimbursement or stipend is offered to a student, it can be accepted. Other sites may have AmeriCorps monies (for example) to pay students. If students can obtain such a position while fulfilling their field experience responsibilities, it is acceptable.

Field Experience Resources



Field Experience Resources

There are people and a variety of resources to assist you as you identify and work in your field experience.

The Field Experience Coordinator:

The field experience coordinator has many contacts in the region, around the state, and in various places in the nation, where past students have completed their field experience and alums are now employed. This person is the one who has the final word on your field experience site and activities, so it is wise to establish and maintain lines of communication early.

If you have a particular interest in exploring field experience options that may be outside the range of “normal”, e.g., an international placement or one with a national organization, talk to the field experience coordinator at least one-two semesters in advance to make sure that any long term planning and the establishment of an affiliation agreement is possible and underway.

Be sure to keep the field experience coordinator informed of your search for a site and how it is progressing.

Faculty Members:

Communicate with your faculty members. If they mention a possible site where some exciting work is occurring, ask if it might be considered a possible field experience site. Open the discussion between your faculty member and the field experience coordinator to determine if the site is, or may become, a field experience site.

When a faculty member invites guest speakers into the class, listen carefully to determine if their organization may be a possible field experience site. Ask if they accept field experience students.

Department of Public Health Sciences List Serve:

The Department of Public Health Sciences has a list serve which disseminates information to current students, staff, faculty as well as alumni. When jobs or possible field experience sites are made available, they are posted on the list serv.

To get on the Department list-serve, contact Dr. Sue Forster-Cox (sforster@nmsu.edu) and request to be placed on the list serv. Provide your NMSU email address to complete this request.

Fellow Students:

Many of your fellow students have already completed their field experience and are good resources. They will be able to provide an overview of the type of work the agency completes, populations served, and the range of experiences they are having or have had.

Regional, State and National Programs:

Many national agencies, e.g. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, Indian Health Services, NM Department of Health, etc., have internship opportunities. Regionally and at the state level, many agencies are seeking field experience students to support their program's efforts. Students should review agency websites plus speak with faculty and the field experience coordinator for possible leads and suggestions.

One program that has been utilized by both graduate and undergraduate students over the years, for placements **outside** of New Mexico, is the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) at <http://www.hacu.net/hacu/Default.asp>. An affiliation agreement would need to be in place before a student could begin to earn hours with any program aligned through HACU.

Another resource is the Health Equity Internship Program. Both graduate & undergraduate students enrolled in minority-serving institutions (NMSU is a Hispanic Serving Institution) can participate in this program. The program supports students in a variety of internship sites. Review the website at <https://asphn.org/health-equity-internship-program/>

Appendices



Appendix A: The Field Experience Step-by-Step Checklist

1. ____ **Meet with your field experience coordinator and discuss general interests and field placement ideas.**
You should begin thinking about and finding a placement at least the semester before you plan to register for your field experience. Remember you are integrating knowledge learned in the classroom and applying this to a “real-world” setting, be creative!
2. ____ **Identify a site and have it approved by the field experience coordinator and preceptor.**
Sites should be identified and approved by:
November 1st for spring semester candidates and April 1st for summer and fall semester candidates.
If an affiliation agreement is required between the organization and NMSU, it will be started at this time; discuss the matter with the field experience coordinator.
3. ____ **Meet with your preceptor and begin to understand and develop your goals and objectives (what you will accomplish while with the program/agency).**
Begin to work on your objectives, outline responsibilities, potential activities, and personal and professional goals for the field experience. This will, potentially, take several emails, meetings, or phone calls between you and your preceptor to clarify what you will be accomplishing.
4. **Work with the field experience coordinator to develop and finalize your goals and objectives.** This can be a time-consuming process, typically involving 5-6+ drafts being exchanged between you and the field experience coordinator. These must be approved and signed by the field experience coordinator and the preceptor. The final copy will be part of your field experience documents.
5. ____ **Agreement signed by the preceptor, student, and field experience coordinator.**
December 10th for spring candidates
May 10th for summer and fall candidates
6. ____ **Register for the Field Experience (PHLS 496/ MPH 596) by the first day of the semester you wish to take the class.** The class is a closed class and can only be entered with approval from the field experience coordinator.
7. ____ **Keep a Daily Log**
Once you have begun your field experience, keep a daily log, following the format provided earlier. Please see Appendix I for details. Record hours worked and activities/events. Your field experience coordinator may ask to see your log from time to time, and it will be included in the documents you turn in at the end of the semester. Time is to be recorded in 15-minute increments.
8. ____ **Complete Mid-term progress report**
Complete the form “Field Experience Mid-Term Progress Report” in Appendix J. Provide a 1-2 page, double spaced, professional assessment of what has been accomplished to date. If your goals and objectives have changed, submit a revised set of goals and objectives. Both student and preceptor will sign the coversheet.
9. ____ **Give your preceptor the form “Preceptor Evaluation of the Student” & BPH or MPH CHES or HMAP competencies evaluation form**

The preceptor will return the completed forms to the field experience coordinator or directly to the student by the appropriate deadline for grading. Be sure, as an MPH student that you provide your preceptor with the correct competencies evaluation form, depending on whether you are a HBHP (formerly CHE) or HMAP concentration.

10. ____ **Complete the “Student Evaluation of Site” form and the Health Education or HMAP evaluation form and turn in via CANVAS.**
Students complete these two forms and place the originals in their notebook.
11. ____ **Prepare your final field experience documents and Field Experience Poster and turn in via CANVAS**

Appendix B: Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health

Domain 1: Conduct and disseminate assessments focused on population health status and public health issues facing the community.

Domain 2: Investigate health problems and environmental public health hazards to protect the community.

Domain 3: Inform and educate the public about health issues and functions.

Domain 4: Engage with the community to identify and address health problems.

Domain 5: Develop public health policies and plans.

Domain 6: Enforce public health laws.

Domain 7: Promote improved access to social resources conducive to health and health care.

Domain 8: Maintain a competent public health workforce.

Domain 9: Evaluate and continuously improve processes, programs, and interventions.

Domain 10: Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health.

Domain 11: Maintain administrative and management capacity.

Domain 12: Maintain capacity to engage with public health governing entities.

American Public Health Association (2019). Public Health Code of Ethics. Washington, D.C.

<https://www.apha.org/->

[/media/files/pdf/membergroups/ethics/code_of_ethics.ashx?la=en&hash=3D6643946AE1DF9EF05334E7DF6AF89471FA14EC](https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/membergroups/ethics/code_of_ethics.ashx?la=en&hash=3D6643946AE1DF9EF05334E7DF6AF89471FA14EC)

Appendix C – Confidentiality Policy

New Mexico State University
Department of Public Health Sciences

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Public Health Sciences that all students in their field experience must sign a statement regarding the confidentiality of patients/clients/participants. This policy is for the protection of these individuals. In signing this form, the student states that s/he will not disclose any names or information regarding the patient/client to peers, friends, or relatives.

I agree to protect the confidentiality of all patients/clients in all situations.

Student / Date

Agency Preceptor / Date

NMSU Field Experience Coordinator / Date

Appendix D: Resume Writing Tips

Career Services can help you with the following both in person or online. Visit them at <http://careerservices.nmsu.edu/>. It is recommended that you establish an account in Aggie Career Manager to use as a repository for your resume and other documents.

1. **Determine your objective**

Structure your resume to fit the objective you have identified, if you are applying for a health education position, for example, highlight, focus, and structure your resume to fit a clear objective.

2. **Your resume is a tool to market yourself**

Identify your features and strengths, why you are unique, and convey that in your resume.

3. **Your goal is to obtain an interview**

Be clear and concise; do not go into detail about every position. You are generating interest so that the potential preceptor/employer will want to contact you so that you can discuss your accomplishments.

4. **Use action words**

Use bulleted statements with action words like prepared, presented, monitored, etc.

5. **Lead with your strengths**

Resumes are typically scanned in 30 seconds. Take time to develop either bullets or a format that clearly supports your objective.

6. **Review the position description.**

Use key words listed in the job description and match them in your resume.

7. **Highlight the positive**

Focus on duties and responsibilities that support your objective.

8. **Construct the resume to read clearly**

Leave white space, limit the length to 1-2 pages, and use a font no smaller than 10 point.

9. **Have someone review and proof-read your resume**

You are often too close to the resume to see errors or potential questions; feedback from others can be useful input.

Adapted from:

Hackett, A. (2007). Quest Career: Resume writing tips to help you write a resume.

Retrieved from <http://www.questcareer.com/tips.htm>.

Appendix E: Interviewing Tips

Career Services can also help you with mock interviews. Visit them at <http://careerservices.nmsu.edu/>

When you interview, keep in mind some of the following:

Be prepared:

1. Find out all you can about the organization by looking at their website for their mission statement, vision, and goals plus major projects or initiatives underway.
2. Find out what activities current employees are involved with and where you might be able to fit in.
3. Dress to impress by wearing clothes that are neat, clean, and pressed. Dress in a manner that is professionally appropriate to the position for which you are applying.
4. Be professional and on-time. Turn off your phone and throw away your gum before meeting your potential preceptor.

During the interview

5. Listen carefully to questions; if you feel a question is unclear, ask politely for clarification.
6. Pause before answering, so you consider all the facts.
7. Keep answers and ideas focused and to the point, discuss only the facts or ideas needed to respond to the questions.
8. Focus on your success, give positive information about yourself, and avoid being negative.
9. Maintain eye contact even when searching for answers to questions.

Prepare yourself ahead of time and think about how you would respond to the following questions:

1. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
2. Why do you want to work in this field or with this organization?
3. What skills and experience would you bring to this organization?
4. What motivates you?
5. How do you measure success?
6. What type of people do you have the most trouble getting along with in the workplace, and how do you handle them?

Appendix F: Sample letter of introduction

Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone Number

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is _____. At this time, I am a student at New Mexico State University pursuing my Bachelor's Degree in Public Health. As a Public Health student, I am required to complete a 250-hour field experience. This gives me the opportunity to apply classroom learning to actual public health problems and solutions. It would be beneficial for me, if you may consider allowing me to fulfill my field experience, at your facility under the supervision of a preceptor.

It is my belief that your facility would greatly benefit by having me. In order to fulfill my field experience portion of my degree, I must complete 250 clock hours. Ideally, I would like to do this over the summer or the fall. The link below is the "Field Experience Handbook" from the NMSU Department of Public Health Sciences website
<https://publichealth.nmsu.edu/field-experience/>

Personally, I am very interested in working (insert information pertinent to your interests as they align with the agency/program). Your agency/program would benefit in having a productive student, capable of assuming some responsibilities and fulfilling tasks. The field experience assignment provides your agency an opportunity to observe me as a prospective employee in the field of public health.

This is a strictly voluntary. Please know that I am a very motivated worker and eager to learn a great deal, and begin to apply some of my classroom knowledge with your organization. Please feel free to contact me by phone or email, with your questions you may have, xxx@nmsu.edu or 575-111-1111. Please get back to me at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Appendix G: Sample of field experience goals and objectives

Each student will develop goals and objectives for your field experience.

- BPH students, taking PHL 496 for 6 credits, are to develop 3-4 goals and 8-12 measurable objectives.
- MPH students, taking MPH 596 for 3 credits, should develop 2-3 goals and 5-7 measurable objectives

Sample (for a MPH student – HBHP [formerly CHE] concentration)

By [last day of semester], [your name] will have completed the following in partial fulfillment of MPH 596 [or PHL 496] – Field Experience at the [location of field experience].

Goal 1: Increase my knowledge of services provided by [agency or department].

Objectives:

1. Learn about the [agency or department's name] mission, priority population(s), and outreach activities by reviewing past events and activities, brochures and pamphlets, the website, and conversing with staff by [date – day, month], 202x.
 - 5.5.2 Analyze an organization's culture to determine the extent to which it support health education/promotion.
2. Familiarize myself with the classes, services, and programs offered through the [x, y, and z programs] by reviewing respective websites and visiting locations when necessary by [date], 202x.
 - 6.1.2 Identify valid information resources

Goal 2: Assist in implementing the [name of program] for the [agency or dep't].

Objectives:

1. Research other [agency, state, programs] policies for content, implementation, and enforcement ideas to include in the policy through utilizing web searches and directly contacting other programs, etc by [date].
 - 1.2.1 Identify sources of secondary data related to health
 - 6.1.3 Evaluate resource materials for accuracy, relevance, and timeliness
2. Arrange and maintain a steering committee, by the middle of [month], with various members of on- and off-campus organizations and departments to discuss the implications and possibilities of [x, y, z], meeting on a monthly basis.
 - 1.1.3 Engage priority populations, partners, and stakeholders to participate in the assessment process
3. Research surveys used in other programs, using x, y, and z resources by [date].
 - 6.1.2 Identify valid information sources
4. Modify the chosen survey by [date] and present to my preceptor for her review.
 - 2.3.8 Adapt existing strategies/interventions as needed
5. Assist with the piloting the survey, with of X number of people, at y location by [date].
 - 4.4.3 Monitor and manage data collection
6. Obtain completed surveys from at least x number of people by [date].
 - 1.3.5 Implement quantitative and/or qualitative data collection

Goal 3: Educate the general population on important public health issues through health and wellness programs, events, and take-home materials.

Objectives:

1. Create a minimum of 2 outreach events, on various public health topics, including but not limited to: heart disease and diabetes, sexual health and healthy relationships, substance use, tobacco harm reduction; all events must be completed by [date].
 - 2.2.5 Develop specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-sensitive objectives
 - 2.3.7 Tailor strategies/interventions for priority populations
 - 2.4.2 Identify the resources involved in the delivery of health education/promotion

2. Draft print materials (such as brochures, fact sheets, flyers, and/or press releases) in English for the abovementioned events, and present them to my preceptor for their review, at least one week prior to each event.
 - 2.4.6 Select methods and/or channels for reaching priority populations
 - 3.1.2 Develop materials to implement plan
 - 7.1.1 Create messages using communication theories and models

Note:

NCHEC Areas of Responsibilities and Competencies for the Health Education Specialist, 2020: https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2251/areas_of_responsibilitie_jwedit.pdf

Note: These are sample learning objectives meant to guide you. You will need to develop your own based upon your specific interests and activities.

Appendix H: Field Experience Agreement



New Mexico State University
Department of Public Health Sciences
Phone 575-646-4300
Email sforster@nmsu.edu
Dept web site <http://publichealth.nmsu.edu/>

PHLS 496 Field Placement Agreement

The purpose of the field experience is to provide the student with practical experience in the application of public health principles within the structure and function of an appropriate program or agency.

This form constitutes an agreement between the student, the agency, and the NMSU Department of Public Health Sciences to pursue the above purpose through the goals and objectives herein defined.

Student Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Mobile: _____

Degree: _____

Anticipated Date of Graduation: _____

I have obtained approval to conduct my field experience during the _____ semester, 20__ for _____ credit hours.

The agency at which I will perform the experience is:

Agency: _____

Agency Preceptor/Title: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone and Email: _____

The goals and objectives which will guide my field experience have been agreed upon by the agency preceptor, field experience coordinator, and by me; they are attached.

By signing below, all parties involved agree to meet their responsibilities as outlined in the "Field Experience Manual" located on-line at <http://publichealth.nmsu.edu/field-experience/>

Student: _____ Date: _____

Agency preceptor: _____ Date: _____

Field experience coordinator: _____ Date: _____



New Mexico State University
 Department of Public Health Sciences
 Phone 575-646-4300
 Email: hjmata@nmsu.edu
 Dept web site <http://publichealth.nmsu.edu/>

MPH 596 Field Experience Agreement

The purpose of the field experience is to provide the student with practical experience in the application of public health principles within the structure and function of an appropriate program or agency.

This form constitutes an agreement between the student, the agency, and the NMSU Department of Public Health Sciences to pursue the above purpose through the goals and objectives herein defined.

Student Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Mobile: _____

Degree: _____

Anticipated Date of Graduation: _____

I have obtained approval to conduct my field experience during the _____ semester, 20__ for _____ credit hours.

The agency at which I will perform the experience is:

Agency: _____

Agency Preceptor/Title: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone and Email: _____

The goals and objectives which will guide my field experience have been agreed upon by the agency preceptor, field experience coordinator, and by me; they are attached.

By signing below, all parties involved agree to meet their responsibilities as outlined in the "Field Experience Manual" located on-line at <http://publichealth.nmsu.edu/field-experience/>

Student: _____ Date: _____

Agency preceptor: _____ Date: _____

Field experience coordinator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix I: Daily Logs

Regular attendance and documentation of such attendance is required. Students will complete, **every day they work**, a typed log or diary of the following: 1) what occurred that day; 2) what they accomplished or learned; 3) challenges or obstacles they were involved with; 4) people they met with and/or meetings attended and the purpose of the meetings; and 5) hours worked each day (rounding to 15 minute increments).

An example of a daily log entry may be as follows:

Sept 5 - Attended a staff meeting for one hour where we discussed the upcoming community health activity the agency is sponsoring. I updated them on my booth and the materials I was collecting. I made three calls for additional supplies to X organization, Y hospital, and Z clinic, for the health activity but no one was in their office so I left messages to call me back. I did some research on-line for more information about our health topic so we have information in Spanish as well as English. I put more data into the computer as we make progress on the evaluation project. 8 a.m. – noon; 1-3 p.m. – 6.0 hrs

125 hours worked to date / 125 hours remaining

It is recommended that students keep a running tabulation at the end of each month as to how many hours they have worked for that month and to date, so they are always aware of the number of hours they still need to work to complete the required hours for the Field Experience. All of this documentation will be turned in inside the student's Field Experience notebook at the end of the semester.

A few days' accomplishments/logs can be on one piece of paper. Do not have one day's accomplishments on a single sheet of paper, be efficient with your resources, please.

Appendix J: Field Experience Midterm Report



New Mexico State University
Department of Public Health Sciences
Phone 575-646-4300
Email: hjmata@nmsu.edu
Dept web site <http://publichealth.nmsu.edu/>

Field Experience Midterm Report

Students must complete and submit this form *midway through their field experience (after 110-125 contact hours for BPH and 60-85 hours for MPH)* and secure the preceptor's and the field experience coordinator's signature.

The original of this report will be included in the Field Experience notebook submitted by the student at the end of the semester.

Student name _____

Student is taking the following class: PHLS 496 _____ MPH 596 _____

Expected semester of graduation _____

- Briefly describe your progress to date and submit as an attachment.
- If your objectives have changed, attach a copy of your revised objectives.
- If there are challenges or issues arising at the site, please identify them and a realistic plan of action or resolution.

SIGNATURES

The student is currently making successful progress on the agreed upon field experience.

Student _____ Date _____

Preceptor(s) _____ Date _____

FE Coordinator _____ Date _____

Appendix K – Preceptor evaluation forms

Preceptors are to complete two (2) evaluations

1. Preceptor Evaluation - Evaluation relating to Community Health Education Areas of Responsibilities (see below) or HMAP competencies
2. Preceptor evaluation, for BPH or MPH - this evaluation link is on the Canvas site for the class.

See the Canvas site for the preceptor and student evaluation forms.

Appendix L – Student evaluation forms

BPH and MPH students complete two (2) evaluations

1. Student Evaluation - Evaluation relating to Community Health Education Areas of Responsibilities or HMAP (see below)
2. Student evaluation of the site – this evaluation is on the Canvas site for the class

See the Canvas site for the Field Experience class for all student evaluations

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Photo sources:

NMSU Photo Archive - <http://photo.nmsu.edu/public/photo/>

Google Images – unlicensed images from the southwest