Preceptor Guidelines

Doctor of Public Health Applied Practice Experience
College of Public Health
East Tennessee State University

Applied Practice Experience FYI:

- DrPH programs ensure that graduates have significant advanced-level practical experiences collaborating with practitioners, allowing opportunities to develop leadership competencies and contribute to the field.

- The DrPH Applied Practice Experience (APE) consists of 300 contact hours within an organization external to the student’s school or program so that it is not merely an academic exercise but an application of learning to a “real world” setting. The APE may be completed within a student’s own work setting but must be an extension.
  - All aspects of public health practice are appropriate for the APE; these include, but are not limited to, policy and program development, implementation science, surveillance and evaluation.

- Your role as a preceptor is crucial to developing our future public health leaders.
Preceptor Role in the Applied Practice Experience:

Planning the APE

- The APE provides an opportunity for students to gain practical skills and to demonstrate their ability to apply public health concepts and competencies in a practice setting that is relevant to their concentration area. An essential expectation during this time is that students develop one or more work products that not only add value to your organization but that contribute to the field significantly.
- You (the preceptor) will partner with the student and his/her faculty advisor to develop learning objectives specific to program competencies selected by the student.
- Your guidance is critical at this point to assure the APE begins with a well-defined road map; alterations can be made along the way, of course.
- Face-to-face contact (e.g., an interview) prior to the student’s arrival is beneficial and helps to assure a mutually rewarding experience.

During the APE, it is expected that preceptors:

- Provide a diverse variety of exposure to broaden the student’s awareness and perspective of public health and/or health services. This is a time many students begin to form their professional vision.
- Assist the student in transitioning from an “observer” to a “productive participant” in your organization as quickly as possible.
- Complete and submit candid mid-term and final evaluations and sign student timesheets. Your professional assessment and guidance toward molding a future health professional is most valuable.
- Candidly discuss your performance evaluations with the student and offer professional advice and recommendations. Our students want and value your feedback and guidance.

Methods for Approving Preceptors:

Students identify a qualified preceptor for their APE in consultation with and approval of their faculty advisor. For doctoral students, the preceptor is typically the director of the facility, the head of the department or organizational unit that will be hosting the student or their designee. As such, the preceptor is a working professional with sufficient professional experience to train students in public health practice and to evaluate their ability to apply the competencies of their respective degree program. It is expected that preceptors have three or more years of public health- or health care-related experience and are recognized by their organization to provide the required level of training for public health doctoral students.
Within the APE organization, it is recommended that preceptors have the following interests/abilities:

1) Ability to facilitate interaction and communication with others in the organization;
2) Professional qualifications to fulfill the learning needs of the student as described above; belief in the professional obligation of preceptors and interest in mentorship;
3) Capacity to assign duties and provide necessary resources to the student;
4) Willingness to devote time to field activities including planning and supervision;
5) Commitment to evaluating the student’s performance relative to the program competencies; and
6) Interest in working with the college faculty.

Preceptor Evaluations:
As the student’s APE site preceptor, you will be asked to complete two evaluations of the student’s achievements during the course of their experience: a mid-term and a final evaluation. You will be sent a link to complete the student evaluations electronically at the halfway point of their APE and then again near the end of their experience. We ask that you provide candid feedback on the student’s performance and their adherence to the competencies they set prior to the start of the APE.

Coordinator Contact Information:

Please remember, as the Field Coordinator, I am your partner during this experience. Should you experience a problem or desire assistance during the semester, do not hesitate to contact me and I will be there to assist in any way I can.

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