

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Arnold School of Public Health

Practicum Guide

Arnold School Office of Public Health Practice

The purpose of the Arnold School Practicum Guide is to provide MPH and DrPH students information that can be used to assist in the preparation and completion of their practicum. Students should consult with their academic department on all matters related to their practicum experience.

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1. Overview

Introduction

As an accredited school of public health, the Arnold School of Public Health (Arnold School) meets the programmatic criteria established by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), including the requirements for every student to have a practice experience and a culminating experience:

Criterion 2.4 Practical Skills. *All graduate professional public health degree students must develop skills in basic public health concepts and demonstrate the application of these concepts through a practice experience that is relevant to students' areas of specialization.*

Criterion 2.5 Culminating Experience. *All graduate professional degree programs, both professional public health and other professional degree programs ... shall assure that each student demonstrates skills and integration of knowledge through a culminating experience.*

The professional public health degree programs at the Arnold School include the Master of Public Health (MPH) and the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degrees. The required practical experience for each of these programs is called the practicum or residency and must be a **planned, supervised, and evaluated** component of the professional degree program. Through the practicum or residency, students have the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge gained in coursework. The practicum final report is also considered part of each MPH student's culminating experience, through which the student must demonstrate integration of core public health concepts.

Purpose and Benefits of Completing a Practicum

The Arnold School provides competitive and viable MPH and DrPH academic programs. The purpose of the practicum is to blend practical field experiences with academic learning. The practicum is an essential part of the MPH and DrPH program curricula and is intended to provide hands-on experience in the field of public health. The practicum aims to provide every student with opportunities to apply and test public health concepts and theories in practical settings and demonstrate achievement of the program's public health competencies. The practicum is a mandatory academic requirement and is an important component of a student's culminating experience; therefore, practicum waivers or exemptions are not permitted.

It is very important that students approach the practicum experience with the mindset that this is a career building experience, which can be added to a student's résumé and/or curriculum vitae. The practicum experience is an opportunity to:

- Put academic lessons into practice
- Increase professional confidence
- Improve communication skills
- Develop and expand professional networks

Purpose of the Practicum Guide

This practicum guide provides policies and procedures on the practicum experience for professional public health degrees of the Arnold School. The guide introduces and defines the practicum and explains the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the experience. It addresses expectations for the practicum proposal, work experience, final reports, and evaluation. The guide concludes with program-specific practicum goals and learning objectives, along with other information specific to each program/department.

What is a Practicum?

A practicum is an academic credit course in which the student accomplishes specific tasks at a practice site. The Arnold School MPH practica require a minimum of 250 contact hours associated with six credit hours, and are completed over one to two semesters. The Arnold School DrPH practicum requires a minimum of 300 contact hours through six credit hours and is completed over one to three semesters. All practica are graded on a pass/fail basis.

The practicum is a three-way partnership among the student, faculty advisor, and preceptor. Each partner in this mutually beneficial relationship assumes certain responsibilities, performs specific functions, and receives benefits. The practicum is guided by a set of goals, competencies, and objectives, which are based on the needs and resources of all parties involved. A practicum is individually developed; therefore, the focus, substance, and approach of the practicum will vary, depending on a student's academic program, individual interests, and professional goals. However, the objectives of the practicum must be consistent with the vision, mission, and goals of the Arnold School and of the student's program.

From planning through completion of the practicum, a student works under the guidance of an Arnold School faculty member (practicum advisor) and the supervision of a practitioner (preceptor). Decisions on the nature, site, specific objectives, and activities of the practicum are determined through discussions and agreements among the student, preceptor, and advisor (and perhaps other faculty who have expertise in the area). The roles and responsibilities of each person are outlined in this guide.

A practicum **cannot** be part of a student's existing job or graduate assistantship (GA). It is possible to carry out a practicum at an existing job or GA if it is above and beyond the job or GA requirements and results in the appropriate amount of contact hours. This exception should be carefully negotiated with the practicum advisor. The practicum report is considered part of the culminating experience of each MPH curriculum, much like a project or a thesis. Faculty research projects are generally not appropriate for the practice experience.

The practicum is a professional position and one in which students are representatives of the Arnold School and University of South Carolina. Students are expected to conduct themselves and dress in a professional and ethical manner at all times. Please refer to the Appendix for a discussion of professional and ethical standards.

Experience with organizations that have sponsored Arnold School of Public Health

students suggests that if six major conditions are present, a sound practice activity can be developed. These conditions are:

- The student has some previously developed competence/experience that indicates the potential for contributions to the organization and citizenry, including knowledge gained in prerequisite courses.
- The student and the advisor have developed thoughtful and well-articulated learning objectives that can be pursued in the framework of the practicum experience.
- The student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the specified practicum objectives and is able to identify a supportive network of people in the organization.
- The student seeks advice and mentoring from his/her practicum advisor and/or preceptor.
- A preceptor is identified who wants a productive experience for both the organization and the student.
- An organization wants or needs something done, and it “controls” or “owns” the work results.

Prerequisites

Generally, MPH students are expected to have completed at least three of the five public health core courses and a minimum number of 24 credit hours toward the MPH program requirements before enrolling in a practicum. Additional program-specific prerequisites are provided in the Program-Specific Practicum Information Section.

DrPH students are expected to have completed at least 30 credit hours for their degree program.

The Practicum Website

The Arnold School provides web-based resources and the Opportunity Manager for students, preceptors, and practicum advisors to assist with practicum experiences. These resources are accessed through the Arnold School’s webpage under current student section. The site provides students, faculty, and preceptors with one location for:

- Practicum opportunities
- Policies and requirements
- Forms
- Tools and resources (student checklists, preceptor training, etc.)
- Abstracts from prior practica

2. Criteria for Practicum Sites and Preceptors

Sites

The Arnold School has a long history of working with agencies and organizations that provide practice opportunities. To be considered an eligible practicum site, an organization must satisfy the following criteria:

- Address or serve a public health or health service mission
- Offer students the opportunity to learn from professionals in a supervised environment
- Have a completed and approved Practicum Site Application through the MySPH Opportunity Manager (<http://mysph.sc.edu/om>)

Establish a [Memorandum of Agreement](#) (MOA) with the Arnold School by contacting the Office of Public Health Practice at ASPHPRAC@mailbox.sc.edu. The Arnold School of Public Health uses a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to establish a formal business agreement between the Arnold School and each practicum site. The MOA is used to create a cooperative work agreement that outlines the responsibilities of each party.

Student should contact the Arnold School's Office of Practice at ASPHPRAC@mailbox.sc.edu to determine if an MOA exist or to develop an MOA for the practicum site that is not listed online. A list of approved Practicum Sites is available on the Arnold School's website in the practicum information section.

Preceptors

Preceptors for the practicum are professionals who work in public health practice or health service organizations, such as the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, SC Hospital Association or Alala Cancer Society. To be considered an eligible preceptor, a professional must meet the following criteria:

- Employed by an approved organization (see site criteria)
- *For the MPH:* Have at least a bachelor's degree and two years of experience with master's degree preferred
- *For the DrPH:* Have a graduate degree and five years senior-level experience
- Complete [preceptor/supervisor online orientation](#), available on the Arnold School webpage.
- Agree to professional standards and ethics and to abide by the policies and procedures established by the Arnold School
- Establish an account and create a profile on [MySPH Opportunity Manager](#)

Preceptors have the option to complete introductory coursework in public health, such as *Introduction to Public Health* that presents a history of public health, the 10 essential public health services, and an orientation to the public health profession. This is a self-paced, online course and is accessed through [MySPH Virtual Campus](#).

In exceptional circumstances, departments can waive preceptor criteria by filing a [Preceptor Waiver Form](#) is available in the Practicum Forms Section located on the Arnold School webpage for current students. The student is responsible for submitting the completed preceptor waiver form to their practicum advisor for approval by the student's academic department.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Student

Practicum students are expected to take initiative and responsibility to meet all practicum requirements and to function as a professional at all times. Specifically, students are expected to:

- Select an appropriate setting for a practice activity and make arrangements to conduct the practicum there
- Register for the practicum in the semester in which the practicum begins
- Develop a complete practicum proposal (see section 4) for approval by the practicum advisor and preceptor
- Submit the full proposal through MySPH Opportunity Manager and ensure that it is electronically signed by the practicum advisor and preceptor
- Complete work and learning tasks by the specified deadlines
- Arrange appropriate meetings with the faculty advisor and preceptor, including the final oral presentation
- Discuss practicum-related issues and departmental practicum requirements with the practicum advisor, preceptor and faculty advisor as needed
- Submit all required reports, documents and products to your academic department
- Complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager upon conclusion of the practicum

The Student Practicum Checklist is available online in the [Practicum Forms Section](#) on the Arnold School's webpage "for current students" section. The student practicum checklist provides tasks that must be completed before, during, and after the practicum.

Practicum Advisor

During the practicum, the practicum advisor serves as a resource for both the student and the preceptor. The practicum advisor tracks the student's progress and consults with the preceptor when necessary. The ideal practicum advisor is someone who has an interest related to the student's practicum or someone with whom they have developed a supportive student-faculty relationship. The practicum advisor is expected to:

- Advise the student in developing practicum learning objectives
- Review the practicum proposal and any requested revisions
- Review and approve the practicum proposal in MySPH Opportunity Manager
- Advise the student regarding an Ethics Review if required

- Communicate with the student and preceptor throughout the practicum
- Provide ongoing expert advice and guidance as needed or required
- Attend and evaluate the student's final oral presentation
- Review and evaluate the practicum final report
- Assess accomplishment of learning objectives and assign pass/fail grade at appropriate times
- Complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager

Preceptor

The preceptor is the person at the practicum site who agrees to mentor the student and oversee the day to day activities and projects in which the student is involved. The preceptor should have expertise in the assigned project areas, experience and status within the organization, and the ability and desire to supervise and mentor a student.

The preceptor is expected to do the following:

- Assist the student and the practicum advisor in defining short-term tasks for the practicum project
- Review the student's practicum proposal for usefulness to the organization
- Determine the scope of the preceptor's role with the student
- Electronically sign the practicum proposal through MySPH Opportunity Manager
- Designate appropriate tasks that meet the needs of the organization and address the learning objectives and public health competencies for the student
- Provide on-site direction for the work component of the practicum
- Provide the student with logistical support within the organization (e.g., arrange for space, equipment, use of phones, use of computer and/or computer software, secretarial help; make introductions in the organization; provide data or help gaining access to it; etc.)
- Provide opportunities for growth, development, and leadership for the student
- Assist the faculty advisor with assessment of student's work and growth in competence during the practicum
- Attend and evaluate the student's final oral presentation if possible
- Review and evaluate the practicum final report
- Complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager

4. The Practicum

Practicum Proposal

During this stage of the process, the student works with the preceptor and practicum advisor to develop a practicum proposal that includes the components listed below. The student should communicate with the practicum advisor and preceptor via email, skype, conference call, or in a face-to-face meeting to complete the practicum proposal. Students are required to upload their practicum proposal in MySPH Opportunity Manager, in addition to copying specific information into the database.

The practicum proposal includes the following:

1. Title page
2. Introduction to the public health problem
3. Problem statement and rationale; literature review
4. Setting (description of the practicum site)
5. Project-specific learning objectives. These objectives should clearly relate to the program learning outcomes and reflect synthesis of the public health core
6. Performance objectives that describe project-specific activities including any deliverables and the time line to accomplish these tasks
7. Description of each party's responsibilities; interaction among student, advisor and preceptor; what resources will be provided by each party; how student's performance will be monitored; any particular restrictions for the project identified in the agency's MOA.
8. Bibliography

Once the practicum proposal is completed and accepted by practicum advisor and preceptor, the student must upload the document to MySPH Opportunity Manager and enter specific information from the proposal into the online practicum proposal databank. The student, practicum advisor and preceptor must indicate their approval of the practicum proposal within MySPH Opportunity Manager by electronic signature.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all information in the proposal is accurate and complete and that it is electronically approved prior to starting the practicum. The practicum proposal is for the student's protection, as it will ensure that all parties agree upon the deliverables and experience within the set time frame.

The Practicum Experience

During the practicum, the student is responsible for completing the activities as specified in the practicum proposal. The student should interact with the preceptor and practicum advisor to assess progress and to address any concerns, challenges or unexpected developments.

Final Report and Oral Presentation

The purpose of the final report and oral presentation is to assess the student's learning experience and application of public health theories. The student is responsible for

arranging the time and place of the oral presentation. The practicum advisor and preceptor should be present at the presentation either physically or via Skype. Announcements of this presentation must be posted throughout the Arnold School buildings and online on the MySPH calendar at least one week prior to the presentation. Practicum final report and oral presentation guidelines are located online in the Practicum Forms Section.

The practicum final report begins with sections 1-5 of the practicum proposal followed by a summary of the student's practicum experience with details of specific experiences and how the practicum is important to the field of public health. For MPH students, the final report contributes to the student's culminating experience and should demonstrate the student's ability to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and to apply theory and principles in an experience that represents some aspect of professional practice.

The final report is designed to ensure that all MPH and DrPH graduates can integrate and apply the knowledge and skills that they have gained during their academic graduate training. Students should discuss the expectations of their report carefully with their practicum advisor. The report length should be sufficient to cover the expected content carefully. The best recent reports have usually been five to ten pages in length.

In addition to the narrative report, the student should include any deliverables or products of the practicum experience, e.g., curricular material or resource material. MPH and DrPH students should also refer to their program academic handbook and practicum advisor for additional information and specific requirements for their respective degree program.

Practicum Evaluation

Three weeks prior to the practicum's end date, the practicum advisor, preceptor and student will receive email asking them to complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager. The evaluation is designed to provide feedback on job performance and related issues to assist the Arnold School in monitoring practice and academic preparation for the MPH and DrPH programs.

5. Program-Specific Practicum Information

Biostatistics

Practicum Contact

Robert Moran, PhD

Clinical Assistant Professor and Graduate Director for Biostatistics

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MPH Practicum Prerequisites

- Minimum course prerequisites for the practice experience: successful completion of four department /program core courses (BIOS 701, BIOS 757, EPID 701, and EPID 741). Students must also pass the progression examination before beginning the practicum.
- The practicum advisor may require completion of specific coursework beyond the minimum three public health core courses and at least 24 credit hours overall.

Biostatistics Practicum Goal

The goal of the practicum is for the student to gain experience in evaluating and analyzing a biostatistical problem in a public health setting.

Biostatistics MPH Practicum Learning Objectives

BIOS MPH students will:

1. Demonstrate practical skills in a public health practice setting.
2. Demonstrate the ability to structure available data in an easily useable form, using a variety of data management software tools.
3. Demonstrate the ability to interpret the results of a statistical analysis, and to explain those results in understandable terms to public health practitioners.

DrPH Practicum Prerequisites (BIOS)

- Students should contact their academic department concerning DrPH Practicum Prerequisites.

BIOS DrPH Practicum Learning Objectives

BIOS DrPH students will:

1. Demonstrate command of a wide variety of biostatistical methods, particularly a strong, thorough knowledge of those methods that are most relevant to the application area.
2. Demonstrate familiarity with the culture and parlance of both biostatistics and the application area, in order to foster interdisciplinary research and improve communication between the two areas.
3. Demonstrate leadership and communication skills in detailing the benefits of biostatistical methods.

Epidemiology

Practicum Contact

Linda J. Hazlett, PhD

Clinical Associate Professor and Graduate Director for Epidemiology

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MPH Practicum Prerequisites

- Epidemiology: Minimum course prerequisites for the practice experience: successful completion of four department /program core courses (BIOS 701, BIOS 757, EPID 701, and EPID 741). Students must also pass the progression examination before beginning the practicum.
- The practicum advisor may require completion of specific coursework beyond the minimum three public health core courses and at least 24 credit hours overall.

Epidemiology Practicum Goal

MPH EPID program graduates will demonstrate integration of the MPH core competencies and an understanding of public health practice in a practice setting.

Epidemiology MPH Practicum Learning Objectives

EPID MPH students will:

1. Demonstrate practical skills in a public health practice setting.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in public health practice by successfully completing at least two of the following during their practicum:
 - a. Designing a public health program
 - b. Monitoring and evaluating a public health program
 - c. Writing progress report for funding agency or reporting authority
 - d. Participating in data analysis related to public health program
 - e. Participating in applying for funding for public health program
 - f. Participating in public health-related service delivery.

Environmental Health Sciences

Practicum Contact

Dwayne E. Porter, Ph.D.

Associate Professor and Graduate Director for Environmental Health Sciences

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MPH Practicum Prerequisites

- The practicum advisor may require completion of specific coursework beyond the minimum three public health core courses and at least 24 credit hours overall.

Environmental Health Sciences Practicum Goals

The goals of the Environmental Health Science (ENHS) Practicum are:

1. To provide research and/or educational outreach opportunities for ENHS Master of Public Health (MPH) graduate students with professional organizations focused on contemporary environmental and public health issues.
2. To apply major environmental and public health concepts in assessing real world public health issues of importance.
3. To allow MPH graduate students to fully develop independent and critical thinking skills needed to address 21st century environment and public health issues.

Environmental Health Science MPH Practicum Learning Objectives

ENHS MPH students will

1. Demonstrate practical skills in a public health practice setting.
2. Demonstrate their analytical and critical thinking skills in environmental toxicology, environmental microbiology, GIS, nanomaterials science or other environmental science arenas that fully assess real world environmental or public health problems or issues.
3. Integrate and synthesize concepts of environmental health sciences and public health in ways that enable them to develop their leadership skills in working with public health professionals and the public.

Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior

Practicum Contact

Ken Watkins, PhD

Clinical Associate Professor and Graduate Director for Health Promotion, Education and Behavior

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MPH Practicum Prerequisites

Students must register for three hours of HPEB 798A (Public Health Practicum Seminar) under the designated section of the Practicum Seminar instructor prior to beginning the practicum fieldwork experience. During the Practicum Seminar, students attend class, review public health competencies, identify a practicum site and preceptor, identify a practicum advisor, and develop the practicum contract. After the contract has been finalized, students begin the fieldwork experience. Fieldwork continues in the following semester in the three-hour course HPEB 798B (Public Health Practicum Fieldwork).

HPEB Practicum Goals

Strengthen a student's personal understanding of the realities of program planning, implementation, and evaluation. This is achieved by:

- Familiarizing the student with the:
 - practice of public health promotion and education to help the student identify with the profession
 - organizational and administrative dimensions of public health promotion and education
 - functional activities of a specific setting

HPEB MPH Practicum Objectives

HPEB MPH students will

1. Demonstrate practical skills in a public health practice setting.
2. Demonstrate an ability to research, develop, implement, and evaluate a program involving health behavior change at the individual, agency, or community level.

DrPH Practicum Prerequisites

Students should contact their academic department concerning DrPH Practicum Prerequisites.

HPEB DrPH Practicum Learning Objectives

HPEB DrPH students will:

1. Demonstrate the ability to lead the process of creating an organization's vision, mission and goal-setting for the organization, guide decision-making, influence and advise others in a way that benefits the organization, and build capacity to successfully carry out the mission of the organization.
2. Use effective communication strategies and be able to persuasively argue for policies that improve the health of the public.
3. Develop and implement formative, process, impact and/or outcome evaluations for the performance of a specific program or of the organization in relation to its vision and mission.
4. Identify individual, organizational, community and socio-cultural influences on health and health behavior.

Health Services Policy and Management

MPH Practicum Contact

Kelli Kenison, PhD

Clinical Assistant Professor and Graduate Director for the MPH in Health Services Policy and Management

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MPH Practicum Prerequisites

The practicum advisor may require completion of specific coursework beyond the minimum three public health core courses and at least 24 credit hours overall.

HSPM MPH Practicum Goals

Graduates will be prepared to be effective public health managers by learning to apply concepts and theories related to the foundation of public health systems, management, quality improvement, evaluation, economics, information systems, and public health finance.

HSPM MPH Practicum Learning Objectives

HSPM MPH students will

1. Demonstrate practical skills in a public health practice setting.
2. Apply management principles and demonstrate skills in program planning, development, budgeting, management and evaluation in health care and/or public health organizational settings.
3. Demonstrate leadership skills for building partnerships and leading organizations.

DrPH Practicum Contact

M. Mahmud Khan, Ph.D

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DrPH Practicum Prerequisites

Students should contact their academic department concerning DrPH Practicum Prerequisites

HSPM DrPH Practicum Goals

Students should contact their academic department concerning DrPH Practicum Goals.

HSPM DrPH Practicum Learning Objectives

HSPM DrPH students will:

1. Demonstrate the ability to lead the process of creating an organization's vision, mission and goal-setting for the organization, guide decision-making, influence and advise others in a way that benefits the organization, and build capacity to successfully carry out the mission of the organization.
2. Use effective communication strategies and be able to persuasively argue for policies that improve the health of the public.
3. Develop and implement formative, process, impact and/or outcome evaluations for the performance of a specific program or of the organization in relation to its vision and mission.

Physical Activity and Public Health

Practicum Contact

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Clinical Assistant Professor of Exercise Science and

Graduate Director, MPH in Physical Activity and Public Health & MS Programs

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Prerequisites

The practicum advisor may require completion of specific coursework beyond the minimum three public health core courses and at least 24 credit hours overall.

Physical Activity Practicum Goal

The goal of the practicum is for the student to demonstrate basic understanding of the philosophy of public health practice as applied to programs to increase/promote physical activity in a particular population, or to provide surveillance of physical activity.

MPH-PAPH Practicum Learning Objectives

MPH-PAPH students will

1. Demonstrate practical skills in a public health practice setting.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in public health practice by successfully completing at least two of the following during their practicum:
 - a. Using measurement and surveillance mechanisms to determine physical activity levels across populations
 - b. Assessing organizational and community needs for physical activity
 - c. Planning, implementing and evaluating physical activity programs and initiatives
 - d. Developing and communicating physical activity messages
 - e. Building physical activity coalitions
 - f. Identifying physical activity resources
 - g. Developing and using a variety of educational methods and materials for physical activity promotion
 - h. Acting as an advocate for physical activity policies

Master of Public Health in General Public Health (General MPH)

Practicum Contact

Michael Byrd, Ph.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor and Graduate Director for the General MPH

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Prerequisites

The practicum advisor may require completion of specific coursework beyond the minimum three public health core courses and at least 24 credit hours overall.

General MPH Practicum Goals

Graduates will be prepared to promote public health competencies in a variety of settings to develop, manage and evaluate public health programs.

General MPH Practicum Learning Objectives

General MPH students will:

1. Demonstrate practical skills in a public health practice setting.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in public health practice by successfully completing at least two of the following during their practicum:
 - a. Evaluating a given health related problem and identifying the most appropriate statistical technique for analysis
 - b. Assess programs and policies designed to protect and promote environmental health
 - c. Applying descriptive and analytic epidemiology methods to identify and investigate factors associated with various health conditions
 - d. Applying proven social science, health and behavior theories in the planning, implementation, and/or evaluation of health education and promotion programs
 - e. Applying the principles of program planning, development, budgeting, management and evaluation to organizational and community initiatives.

Appendix

Ethics and Professional Standards

Students are expected to act in an ethical, responsible and professional manner. These ethical principles benefit and protect the students, as well as clients, placement agencies, preceptors, and the university. Students are also expected to learn and adhere to guidelines specific to the practicum site. If, at any time, a student has questions about ethics or responsible conduct, they should immediately contact the practicum advisor or preceptor. Commitment to ethical principles and the capacity to engage in ethical decision-making processes are hallmarks of professionalism. At a minimum, students must adhere to the following ethical principles:

- All information related to clients of the practicum site is to remain confidential.
- Students must follow standards of academic integrity as described by the [Office of Academic Integrity](#). Any student identified as having engaged in any acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, copying information available through the worksite and presenting it as the student's own work to either representatives of the host organization or the practicum faculty advisor) while engaged in practicum activities will be subject to the standards and review process outlined in the bulletin, including the possibility of dismissal.
- Students should be guided by codes of ethics most closely associated with the profession and organization of their practicum site.
- Students are encouraged to discuss with either the preceptor or their practicum advisor any activities they believe may potentially compromise legal or ethical standards.
- Students may undertake only those program activities explicitly outlined in the practicum agreement or assigned by the preceptor or practicum advisor.
- Students may not correspond with or for clients regarding matters of a professional nature without explicit approval of the preceptor.
- Students may not visit clients socially during regular working hours without explicit approval of the practicum preceptor.

One of the most important components of the practicum is practicing appropriate professional workplace behavior. Practicum students are expected to demonstrate the standard of behavior expected of other employees in the organization, including compliance with the organization's policies and procedures. Thus, students are expected to act in a professional manner at all times. The behavior of practicum students should reflect favorably upon the worksite and the university. Students are expected to dress professionally and to arrive and depart at agreed upon hours. They also should promptly inform their preceptor of any anticipated absences or delays in their arrival times. They are expected to complete all agreed upon activities and work in a timely and professional manner. Professional expectations for behavior and conduct include the following:

- Appearance: The student exhibits personal cleanliness, grooming, and dress appropriate for the organization and position.
- Attendance: The student reports regularly, consistently and on time as described in the practicum agreement or agreed upon with the preceptor.

- Accuracy: The student displays accuracy in his or her work (thorough and efficient).
- Responsibility: The student follows directions, is a self-starter and stays on task without close supervision.
- Relationships: The student exhibits respect and appropriate relationships with other employees, clients, and students (tact, courtesy, cooperation).
- Conduct: The student uses good judgment and displays honesty, integrity, confidentiality, and respectfulness.

It is very important that students maintain an open line of communication with their preceptor. If they encounter any problems which they cannot resolve on their own, they should discuss the matter with their preceptor. If the student feels the problem has not been resolved after speaking with their preceptor, then they should contact their practicum advisor for assistance. The Arnold School Office of Public Health Practice is available to assist and support faculty, preceptors and students.

Although MPH and DrPH practica typically do not require IRB approval from USC Office of Research Compliance, it is still important for each MPH and DrPH student to be familiar with the IRB requirements at the University of South Carolina. However, some projects may need to be approved by the agency review committee at the practicum site. Certain categories of research have been designated as exempt from federal regulations related to the use of human subjects. Institutions may choose to recognize these categories of exemption and waive the requirement for review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The University of South Carolina requires review of all research involving human subjects, but imposes different requirements for research meeting the criteria for exemption. Visit USC's Office of Research Compliance to learn more about the IRB process. Any necessary approvals must be obtained prior to beginning work on the defined practicum tasks. Some practicum activities related to an ongoing research project may be covered under that project's IRB approval. Such approval should be discussed with the project principal investigator and/or practicum advisor. In most situations, notification to the IRB of a change in protocol is sufficient.