Walden University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, [www.hlcommission.org](http://www.hlcommission.org). Walden University practices a policy of nondiscrimination in admission to, access to, and employment in its programs and activities. Walden does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion or creed, marital status, disability, national or ethnic origin, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or other legally protected status.

Walden is committed to providing barrier-free access to its educational services and makes appropriate and reasonable accommodations when necessary. Students requesting accommodations per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) must contact the Office of Disability Services at disability@mail.waldenu.edu.

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PURPOSE OF THE MPH PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

In 1978, the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) defined the mission of public health as “enhancing health in human populations, through organized community effort.” The Master of Public Health (MPH) program at Walden University is guided by this definition as well as by the university’s mission of promoting positive social change.

The field instruction experience that students receive through the practicum is a critical educational component of the MPH program. The practicum is designed to provide students who have finished their coursework with the opportunity to:

- Synthesize knowledge.
- Develop competence in professional practice in the foundational areas identified by CEPH.
- Apply knowledge to the solution of public health problems.
- Reinforce the program learning outcomes and MPH competencies.
- Develop a respect for and commitment to the continued pursuit of professional knowledge.

Depending on the specific needs of the chosen public health agency, students’ activities should reflect the 10 Essential Public Health Services, as stated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

1. Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of healthcare when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure competent public and personal healthcare workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

The essential services provide a working definition of public health and a guiding framework for the responsibilities of local public health systems. Additional information can be found at www.cdc.gov/nphpsp/essentialServices.
Competencies that students should expect to gain from the practicum experience must reflect the following MPH program learning outcomes.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the MPH program, students will be able to:

1. Utilize culturally appropriate communication skills to convey prevention and intervention strategies used to improve health outcomes among diverse local and global populations.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how research methods, biostatistical data and software, and the epidemiological approach impact the study of patterns of disease, disability, and injury.
3. Evaluate biological, environmental, legal, and regulatory factors that affect the health of local and global communities.
4. Evaluate the major social, behavioral, and cultural factors that affect the health of local and global populations.
5. Appropriately access, interpret, and evaluate public health data that are available through the use of information technology.
6. Analyze essential services, systems, public policies, and associated challenges that impact the health of local and global communities.
7. Demonstrate skills needed for sound leadership and decision making in public health, including applications of ethics and professionalism.
8. Apply health management and systems thinking to public health agencies, programs, policies, and issues.
9. Apply the principles of program design, implementation, and evaluation to improve the health of local and global populations.
10. Exhibit a commitment to professional and ethically responsible public health research and practice.

*Note:* Students are required to select at least four of these learning outcomes to be addressed during the practicum experience.

**Competencies**

The competencies that MPH students are expected to demonstrate by the end of the program and their relationship to the MPH program’s learning outcomes are shown in the tables below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>MPH Foundational Competency</th>
<th>LO1</th>
<th>LO2</th>
<th>LO3</th>
<th>LO4</th>
<th>LO5</th>
<th>LO6</th>
<th>LO7</th>
<th>LO8</th>
<th>LO9</th>
<th>LO10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Compare the organization, structure, and function of health care, public health, and regulatory systems across national and international settings.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities, and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community, and societal levels.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities’ health.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Select methods to evaluate public health programs.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>MPH Foundational Competency</td>
<td>LO1</td>
<td>LO2</td>
<td>LO3</td>
<td>LO4</td>
<td>LO5</td>
<td>LO6</td>
<td>LO7</td>
<td>LO8</td>
<td>LO9</td>
<td>LO10</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Apply principles of leadership, governance, and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration, and guiding decision making.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Perform effectively on interprofessional teams.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Apply systems-thinking tools to a public health issue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1b. MPH Program Competencies, Walden University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Program-Specific (“Concentration”) Competency</th>
<th>LO1</th>
<th>LO2</th>
<th>LO3</th>
<th>LO4</th>
<th>LO5</th>
<th>LO6</th>
<th>LO7</th>
<th>LO8</th>
<th>LO9</th>
<th>LO10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assess the positive social change impact resulting from a public health intervention.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Analyze social change solutions to environmental health issues.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Evaluate the role of a public health agency in implementing positive social change initiatives or policy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop professional public health products that demonstrate the integration of practical public health skills.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Evaluate personal strengths as a scholar-practitioner to support and promote the field of public health.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIELD SITE AND PRECEPTOR EXPECTATIONS

Walden University views the practicum as a joint sharing of responsibility among the student, the student’s supervisor on site for the practicum (usually referred to as the preceptor), and a Walden faculty member (i.e., the course instructor). Two staff members at Walden, the practicum director and field education coordinator, oversee the administrative aspects and the quality of the experience from beginning to end.

Jointly supervising a student completing a practicum is an important undertaking. Walden University would like to thank preceptors and sites for their interest in providing field instruction for Walden’s MPH students.

The following are the expectations and responsibilities that the field site and preceptor need to consider:

1. The student and the preceptor should discuss learning and teaching styles and expectations, methods for facilitating learning, and methods for evaluating progress.
2. The preceptor must provide the student with an orientation to the field site, including the safety considerations, policies, and procedures within which the student is to operate.
3. The preceptor should clearly identify tools and learning opportunities, provide frequent constructive feedback, and provide ongoing evaluation of the student.
4. The preceptor should be available to the student as needed and provide close coordination of any additional persons who will work with the student.
5. The field site must provide the student with an appropriate work space and a private space for student evaluation.
6. Students are required to purchase professional liability insurance. The field site may request a copy of the student’s certificate of liability insurance coverage if needed.
7. The preceptor must provide at least 1 hour of direct supervision to the student for every 15 hours worked. This supervision may not be delegated.
8. The preceptor must sign off on all time sheets to certify that the student worked the hours indicated. This activity may not be delegated.
9. The practicum requires the student to complete a minimum of 200 hours of direct or indirect community health practice activities.
10. The practicum is a two-quarter series. The 11-week quarters start at the beginning of March, June, September, and December: exact dates will be provided by the university. The student is expected to begin practicum hours within the first 7 days after the start of the approved quarter (but not before) and be allowed on site as agreed upon in the Learning Agreement until all required hours are met. Extension of work hours beyond the last day of the second quarter will require the approval of the practicum director.
11. One midterm conference call is required to take place during the first quarter of registration. The conference call is to include the student, the preceptor, and the Walden faculty member. Additional calls may be requested by any party.
12. The student and preceptor evaluations at the end of the practicum experience are a very important aspect of the practicum. The student and preceptor will each receive a link to an electronic evaluation form to complete. The evaluations will be used in providing feedback for student assessment and future field experience planning.
FIELD SITE BENEFITS

The field site is gaining an individual who has successfully completed all requirements for a Master of Public Health degree except the practicum experience. The student is a productive asset capable of assuming responsibility and fulfilling tasks. The practicum assignment can provide the field site with an opportunity to observe the student as a prospective employee.
REQUIRED FIELD SITE DOCUMENTS

The student will provide the field site with information, including a schedule of practicum deadlines. Certain documents will need to be signed and returned to Walden before the student begins the practicum, including the three described below.

Preceptor Résumé/Curriculum Vitae

Individuals providing direct supervision of students within the MPH program must have, at minimum, a master’s degree and 2 years of relevant public health experience. The résumé or curriculum vitae (CV) of the proposed preceptor is required as proof of educational background, professional credentials, and public health experience, and it must reflect employment by date and correct contact information for the field site. Students must upload their preceptor’s résumé to their practicum application. Upon approval of the preceptor and the practicum application, the field education coordinator will send a notification e-mail to both the student and the preceptor.

Note: If no preceptor résumé or CV is available, a brief letter that includes the following will be accepted: degrees and years awarded, certifications held, current place of employment, and job description as it relates to the practicum. (A copy of the preceptor’s LinkedIn profile will also be accepted as long as it contains the necessary information.) If the preceptor has recently served as a preceptor with Walden, students can upload a letter from the preceptor to authorize the field experience office to utilize his or her résumé on file.

Preceptor Signature Form

The Preceptor Signature Form is the preceptor’s agreement to participate in the preceptorship with the Walden University MPH student. The Preceptor Signature Form is an official form that the preceptor must complete in its entirety. Students are not to complete this form on behalf of the preceptor.

The Preceptor Signature Form is automatically generated and e-mailed directly to the preceptor at the time students enter the preceptor’s information in their practicum application. The preceptor should review the form, complete it in its entirety, and sign the form.

The preceptor must complete the form electronically and agree to Walden University’s Policy on Electronic Signatures.

After the preceptor completes and signs the form, he or she should send it directly to the student. Students will then upload this form as part of their practicum application. Upon final approval of the students’ application, the preceptor will receive a confirmation e-mail with a Preceptor Orientation.
Field Site Affiliation Agreement

The field site Affiliation Agreement is the legal contract between the field site and Walden University. Accreditation standards and university policy require that a signed Affiliation Agreement be in place before students start their practicum.

The standard Walden University agreement must be signed first by an appropriate field site administrator, as defined by the field site. After the signed agreement is submitted to Walden, the field education coordinator will assist in obtaining the countersignature of the dean of Walden University’s College of Health Sciences. A fully executed copy of the agreement will be sent to the field site.

If the field site wants to make changes to the standard Walden University agreement, the field site should e-mail a Word document of the agreement that is redlined to show the desired changes to mphfield@mail.waldenu.edu. The requested changes will be reviewed by a contract administrator from Walden University’s Office of Applied Learning Agreements.

If the field site wants to use an agreement other than the standard Walden University agreement, the field site should e-mail an editable Word document version of its preferred agreement to mphfield@mail.waldenu.edu. The document will be reviewed by a contract administrator from Walden University’s Office of Applied Learning Agreements.

*Note:* Field site Affiliation Agreements need to be submitted at least 6 weeks prior to the term start to allow time for review and approval.

Learning Agreement

Students will receive the *Learning Agreement* form from the field education coordinator upon approval of their practicum application.

The *Learning Agreement* form must be filled out jointly by the student and the field site preceptor and approved by the practicum director prior to the practicum start date.

The student should e-mail the completed *Learning Agreement* to the field education coordinator for review prior to obtaining signatures.

The student and the preceptor should discuss and agree upon the tasks that the student can expect to contribute to or complete during the practicum. The student should be directed to think in terms of outcomes and products. A portfolio of practicum products will be required of the student at the end of the practicum: The portfolio may contain any materials that were created singly or jointly by the student, such as brochures, manuals, curricula, audiovisuals, and reports.

Walden University’s Policy on Electronic Signatures

Walden University manages the practicum application processes in a nearly paperless environment, which requires reliance on verifiable electronic signatures, as regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an electronic signature can be the person’s typed name, e-mail address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as
a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. The field education coordinator for the College of Health Sciences will verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an e-mail address officially on file with Walden University).

**Note:** Handwritten or digital signatures are required for the field site Affiliation Agreement. A typed-in name or e-mail address is insufficient.

Additional information for preceptors can be found at [https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/sohs/fieldsites](https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/sohs/fieldsites).

**Please direct questions to:**
Field Education Coordinator
School of Health Sciences
1-800-925-3368
mphfield@mail.waldenu.edu