University of Toronto
Dalla Lana School of Public Health

MPH Epidemiology Practicum

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Goals of this presentation

• Introduce the purpose of the practicum

• Outline the requirements of the practicum

• Outline roles and responsibilities

• Provide information so that you may succeed academically and develop professionally
The Practicum is a Unique Learning Opportunity

• It allows you to:
  • Satisfy the academic requirements for the MPH program
  • Apply classroom learning (Forest beyond the trees!)
  • Be engaged in a planned, supervised and evaluated experience
  • Meet your academic goals and follow your professional interests
Supervisor comments

• “(The student) was flexible, took advantage of this learning opportunity to identify ways to improve data quality, and continually strived to apply her epidemiological expertise to achieve a final deliverable that would have a meaningful impact”.

• “(The student) excelled at all the placement requirements and has made a significant contribution to many organizational priorities. We are quite happy with the practicum experience and would gladly welcome students in subsequent years.”
Student comments

• “There was a lot of room to explore my interests and learn about how to formulate research based on my interests. The practicum helped consolidate many of the concepts learned from 1st year courses (critical appraisal of studies, data analysis, research reporting).”

• “Overall the practicum was an amazing experience- I learned a lot about hospital epidemiology and “how” epidemiologists need to think”.
Prerequisites

- Biostatistics 1 & 2 (CHL5201H & CHL5202H)
- Epidemiology 1 & 2 (CHL5401H & CHL5402H)
- Population Perspectives for Epidemiology (CHL5426H)
- Health Trends & Surveillance (CHL5405H)
- Public Health Policy (CHL5300H)
- Scientific Overviews in Epidemiology (CHL5418H)

- All the required courses in 1st year
Responsibilities

- Student
- Practicum placement officer
Practicum placement officer responsibilities

- Provide a list of placements to students in January
- Assist the student in selecting their first placement
- Ensure practicum supervisors are aware of their roles and responsibilities
- Assist in completing the learning contract, as necessary
- Assist in determining if practicum objectives/proposed deliverables meet required program criteria
- Collect forms and final package
- Available for meetings before, during or after placements with students and/or supervisors
Student responsibilities

- Contact potential preceptors in a professional manner with your CV and cover letter; be prepared to interview for a position
- Enroll for practicum credits
- Ensure you have read and abide by the University’s Standards for Professional Practice Behavior
- Comply with policies and procedures of placement organization
- Ensure the Practicum forms (beginning, interim and final) are submitted to the practicum placement officer in a timely manner
- Maintain communication with practicum placement officer
MPH Epidemiology Practicum Final Checklist

• To be submitted:

  • Confirmation of Practicum form
  • Learning Contract
  • Interim Evaluation (student)
  • Interim Evaluation (supervisor)
  • Final Evaluation (student)
  • Final Evaluation (supervisor)
  • Practicum report (3-4 page reflection on placement)
  • Practicum deliverables (as outlined in learning contract)
  • Practicum Abstract
  • PowerPoint poster

• The practicum package is reviewed by the Practicum placement officer and the MPH Epidemiology Program Director

• Grade: Credit/ No Credit
Practicum deliverables

• A few examples from past students:

  • Health Status Reports
  • Manuscripts for publication
  • Outbreak Reports
  • Indicator development
  • Surveillance tool development
As of 2014, the University of Toronto requires a student placement agreement to be in place with the host organization prior to a student starting a placement.

No agreement, no placement.

List of organizations with agreements in place with UT on Blackboard.
Capstone

• Students looking for a thesis-equivalent

• Submit a Capstone proposal including a timeline for the 3.5 credits with breakdown by semester

• Identify a supervisor early
Resources

- Practicum guidelines
- Blackboard site (access granted December 2015)
- Practicum placement officer
- NETWORK! Talk to colleagues, guest lecturers, faculty members. Go to events. Ask questions. Follow-up.
How do people find jobs?

- Research, Networking & Informational Interviewing: 100%
- Contacting Employers: 90%
- Employment agencies: 80%
- Advertised jobs/online postings: 70%

Survey Data: Adapted from a variety of surveys including the annual Career Centre Recent Graduate Employment Surveys; Richard Bolles “What Colour is Your Parachute?” 2011; and Canadian Labour Market Information
Professional Development

- Graduate Professional Skills workshops
- Career Centre online workshops: finding work, resume/ CV & cover letters, networking, interview techniques
- Professional Development seminars @ DLSPH
Enrolling on ROSI

• First practicum:
  • 16 weeks FT (~560hrs) = 2.0 credits (CHL6010Y & CHL6012Y)

• Second practicum (optional):
  • 12 weeks FT (~420hrs) = 1.5 credits (CHL6020Y, CHL6021H)

• Trouble shooting: Ellen Sokoloff e.sokoloff@utoronto.ca
Collaborative program (or Global Health emphasis) requirements

• E.g. Community Development, Aboriginal Health, Public Health Policy, Addiction Studies

• Start looking and networking early!

• Note: Difficult to complete GH practicum abroad in first summer, more likely to be a January (2nd year) placement
Words of wisdom

• Read up on agencies/researchers you might be interested in working with, early!

• Set specific objectives/goals in your learning contract
• Discuss your objectives and goals with your supervisor before you go on site
• Make arrangements early so that you have a smooth, productive practicum
• When in doubt, do not hesitate to get in contact with me, the earlier the better – I’m here to support you!
Questions? Concerns? Contact me

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