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# **Suggested Practicum Roles and Responsibilities for Faculty Advisors & Site Supervisors**

The following information contains suggested practicum roles and responsibilities for practicum advisors and practicum site supervisors. These roles and responsibilities are not exhaustive and should be used as a guideline to structure your practicum program. Our thanks to the University of Washington School of Public Health for sharing their guidelines which were instrumental in the creation of this document.

# **Guidelines for Faculty Advisors**

Practicum Faculty Advisers mentor students on their practicum experience. They are expected to provide insights into potential practicum sites and projects; advise students on selecting a balanced set of practice-oriented, competency-based activities; review and approve learning contracts; and evaluate students’ overall practicum experience.

**Faculty Responsibilities:**

The Practicum Faculty Adviser may (or must, depending upon the program expectations):

1. Review and approve the practicum learning contract, advise the student on selecting a balanced set of practice-oriented, competency-based activities, and evaluate the student’s overall practicum experience by completing an online evaluation form; and
2. Communicate with student’s Site Supervisor at the beginning and end of the practicum experience to discuss and evaluate the practicum experience, and/or follow any other direction as outlined in an affiliation agreement with a practicum site.

# **Guidelines for Site Supervisors**

The Site Supervisor is a qualified public health professional who supervises a student’s practicum work on a day-to-day basis and evaluates students in the practice setting throughout their practicum. Site Supervisors are committed to hosting and advising the student as they engage in mutually meaningful activities with the public health organization.

**A qualified Site Supervisor must:**

* 1. Hold a position in a public health or population health organization.
  2. Have extensive experience working in the practicum project area.
  3. Be willing to develop a plan, supervise and evaluate the student in the practice setting during and at the end of the practicum.

**A qualified Site Supervisor must not:**

* 1. Be a currently enrolled student.
  2. Be the same person as the student’s Practicum Faculty Adviser, or have a direct reporting relationship with the student’s Practicum Faculty Adviser.
  3. Be the same supervisor as the student’s regular supervisor at their current place of employment.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Site Supervisors supervise students’ work on a day-to-day basis and evaluate students in the practice setting. Specifically, they may (or must, depending upon the program expectations):

* 1. Meet with the student’s program faculty advisor or academic advisor virtually at least once prior to their first-time supervising practicum students.
  2. Advise the student, along with the student’s Practicum Faculty Adviser, on developing an outline of the [Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) foundational competencies](https://media.ceph.org/documents/D2_guidance.pdf) to be carried out during the duration of the proposed project(s), which are documented in the student’s learning contract and is directly aligned with the practicum organization’s needs and student career goals.
  3. Orient the student to the health topic(s), people, policies, procedures, and norms related to the organization/site where the practicum work is conducted.
  4. Provide office space (virtual and/or in-person) and support needed to carry out assigned tasks.
  5. Provide the student with regular contact with public health practitioners and/or target populations such as expecting them to attend management and/or staff meetings as well as program planning and coordination meetings with professionals, agency and/or community.
  6. Meet with the student at regular intervals (at least weekly is suggested) to provide guidance, support, and timely, constructive feedback.
  7. Model professional, ethical behavior.
  8. Complete a [midpoint review and Site Supervisor evaluation](https://sph.washington.edu/mph-practicum/forms) *with*the student.
  9. Identify a suitable replacement if unable to continue in the role of a Site Supervisor.
  10. Communicate with the student’s Practicum Faculty Adviser and/or academic program staff advisor in a timely manner regarding any issues or concerns that arise during the practicum.

**Site Qualifications:**

Practicum can be pursued in a variety of organizations that have dedicated public health staff who are qualified and available to mentor and supervise.

A degree program may stipulate whether or not students are discouraged from completing their Practica at their regular or past place of employment. In some cases, or in some programs, students may be encouraged to seek out practica opportunities in organizations or agencies they have not previously or currently worked in, to gain exposure to different types of public health work and environments. However, in other cases, a degree program may approve a student to complete a Practicum at their place of employment if the following criteria are met (and/or any modifications to these criteria, as outlined by the degree program and faculty advisor):

1. It is unrelated to the student’s current/previous job(s) at the organization.
2. It is in a different department/section of the organization.
3. The Site Supervisor is someone other than the student’s regular supervisor.

**A qualified practicum organization may (or must, depending upon program expectations):**

* 1. Have a current affiliation agreement or MOU with your academic institutions for practicum placements.
  2. Work in public health practice, if it is an organization outside the university.
  3. Have a focus on community engagement addressing public health issues, typically with external community partners.