3.4 Internship/Field Placement

An internship consisting of 240 contact hours is required of all students. The field experience or internship offers students the opportunity to integrate and demonstrate the application of academic knowledge with learned public health core competencies in a professional setting through exposure to one or more core functions of essential public health services.

Each semester (fall, spring, summer), the Field Placement Coordinator(s) will offer meetings to discuss internship interests. MPH 6903 (Comprehensive Field Placement), MPH 6904 (Introduction to Field Placement), and MPH 6905 (Applied Field Placement) are offered each semester including summers. The internship can be completed during any semester. Students should complete their core requirements or the majority of their core requirements before beginning an internship. Most students enroll in MPH 6904 followed by MPH 6905. In some cases, students with previous experience in a public health field may enroll in MPH 6903, Comprehensive Field Placement (3 SH).

Students who recently completed an undergraduate degree without substantial working experience enroll in Introduction to Field Placement (MPH 6904) in the spring of their first year, when the majority, if not all, the core requirements will have been completed. The internship is usually completed during the summer between the first and second year. Students are not limited to summer internships; many students enroll during the fall and/or spring semester. The instructor for MPH 6904 provides a process for completing the internship. Please confer with your academic advisor or student services coordinator about instructors for MPH 6904 in the semester preceding the semester to enroll in internship course MPH 6905.

Field placement is one of the capstone experiences whereby the student and preceptor agency work together within the course structure on a project that is mutually beneficial to the agency and the student. The preceptor is required to have substantial experience in public health leadership.

Preceptor availability often varies by time of year. The ECU MPH program has affiliation agreements with many agencies. Students may suggest an agency but a University Affiliation Agreement (UAA) is required with the agency and may take two or more months to establish between the agency and the University. For more information on field placement go here.

Under some exceptions, students may request a waiver from the internship requirement. Permission must be sought by the Program Director. Another three hour course must be taken to accrue the needed 45 hours.