



School of Public Health

PH 497 – APPLIED PRACTICE

FALL 2021

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

The following FAQ sheet will help BS in Public Health students understand the SPH applied practice/field placement objectives, requirements and process for site approval and registration. For additional information and resources go to the website: <https://gsph.sdsu.edu/fieldpractice/index.php>

Table of Contents:

1. What is an “applied practice experience” in public health? What are the learning objectives for students? – Pg. 2
2. **What are the pre-requisites and requirements for PH 497? – Pg. 2**
3. **What are the criteria for a PH 497 field site approval? – Pg. 4**
4. How do I find an internship site? – Pg. 5
5. Can I do my internship outside of San Diego? - Pg. 6
6. What should I look for in an internship site/project? – Pg. 6
7. Should I be paid for the internship? – Pg. 6
8. **What are the steps to registering for PH 497 credit? – Pg. 7**
9. What if I do not finish the required 144 hours by the end of the Spring semester? – Pg. 8
10. Can I get credit at my place of employment? – Pg. 9
11. What is the role of the Applied Practice Advisor and what can he/she/they help me with? – Pg. 9

1. What is an “applied practice experience” in public health? What are the learning objectives for students?

The applied practice experience in public health (also known as service learning, field placement, practicum or internship) is defined as the preparation of public health students or professionals that involves **supervised practical application** of public health theory learned at a private/public agency or company. The experience provides students with the opportunity to integrate and apply classroom learning in a public health work environment, which allows them to observe and learn from professionals in the field.

The School of Public Health offers several degree programs however, **this guidance is specifically for Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BS)**. Students are expected to achieve through their coursework and applied practice experiences; however, generally, field experiences should help you achieve at least three of the following learning objectives:

<https://publichealth.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/public-health-objective180515.pdf>

2. What are the pre-requisites and requirements for PH 497?

First, it is important to note that PH 497 is ONE option to fulfill Area B requirement. Other options can be found here: <https://publichealth.sdsu.edu/programs/bs-public-health/bachelors-curriculum/>

For three units of PH 497, students are required to complete 144 hours of field practice (124 hours through Summer 2022). There are no in-person classes. This equates to approximately 10 hours a week during a regular 16-week semester and 12+ during the summer. Students have the option of registering for the course in the semester they plan to finish the hours OR in the semester after. There are two reasons a student would register in the semester AFTER they finish their internship hours: 1) course credit is not available in the summer, therefore, students completing their hours in the summer will need to register for PH 497 credit in the fall 2) some students want more time to complete the hours. For example, some students will get approval from the Internship/Practice Coordinator to start their internship in Fall but have through the end of spring to finish so they register for spring credit instead.

Students who meet the following pre-requisites may register for PH 497 upon approval of the field site/project:

- Current Majors Only
- Junior/Senior 300, 302, 307 and credit or concurrent registration in 304, 305 and 306.

Students are expected to work the 144 hours (124 through Summer 2022) at ONE site in the community (exceptions must be approved by the Applied Practice Advisor). Students are required to have/submit the following. Due dates will vary depending on start date; however, several must be uploaded to Blackboard during the semester enrolled in the course:

a. **Service Learning Agreement (SLA) on file with SDSU** – Prior to starting work

IMPORTANT: It can take up to 4 weeks to establish SLA's with new sites so plan ahead

- All internship sites must have an SLA in place and on file with SDSU before starting work or the first week of the semester in which credit is requested, whichever is sooner. This agreement protects the student and University by ensuring that the student is covered for general and professional liability insurance. The University coverage called SAFECLIP, provides coverage for students enrolled in service-learning course sections for which they receive academic credit. In essence, the program provides indemnity, including legal defense costs for students, faculty, campus and host institution (when required by contract/ agreement), if there is a claim or lawsuit involving injury to others or damage.
- Students/sites can first check the SDSU SLA Master List for the name of the site here: <https://bfa.sdsu.edu/financial/procurement/servlearning.aspx>
- If site is not on the list, the student or site contact should reach out to the Applied Practice Advisor to initiate the process. **Please allow up to 4 weeks.**

b. **Release of Liability** – This releases the University from liability in the event of an injury or illness while working at the internship – Prior to starting internship

c. **Internship Agreement** – Within two weeks of starting internship or start of the semester, whichever comes first

d. **Online Evaluation** (both student and supervisor must complete) – Within two weeks of completing hours or during Finals week, whichever comes first

e. **Final Log of Hours** – Within two weeks of completing hours or during Finals week, whichever comes first

IMPORTANT: The Applied Practice Advisor/Instructor will provide you with additional instructions, due dates and information once your Request for Field Site Approval has been approved. If you do not receive this please contact her immediately.

3. What are the criteria for a PH 497 field site approval?

IMPORTANT: All internship sites must be approved **PRIOR** to starting work and/or counting the hours.

- a. The site must be in the community environment which may include, but is not limited to, government agencies, community health clinics, nonprofit organizations, research institutions, advocacy and policy programs, and private institutions. To be appropriate for applied practice experience activities, university-affiliated research settings (i.e. IBACH, Institute for Public Health or UCSD research centers etc.) should not be the primary setting for the practice experience. Students should either be placed in a community partner site and/or performing tasks/duties which allow for regular engagement with community members and professionals. In other words, students should not be interacting with faculty supervisors and staff only.

IMPORTANT: Clinical positions involving individualized patient care are NOT appropriate internships unless the primary project for credit is more aligned with public health learning objectives/competencies (see below).

- b. The internship primary duties and responsibilities (minimum of 60%) must allow students to apply what they are learning in their coursework, helping them to achieve **at least three of the SDSU Bachelor of Science in Public Health Program Objectives:**
<https://gsph.sdsu.edu/fieldpractice/BS%20in%20Public%20Health%20Overview%20of%20Competencies.pdf>

NOTE: While it is expected that most positions will include general office duties (i.e. answering phones, filing, copying, assembling materials, etc.), the majority of the time should be spent assisting with designing, implementing or evaluating a public health project or program.

- c. The site provides appropriate supervision with an agency/site supervisor in a management-level position and is committed to being accessible and available for direction, guidance and mentorship when appropriate. The supervisor must agree to working with the student in meeting requirements and assignments for the course.
- d. Professional Liability Insurance is required for all students who obtain credit for their applied practice/internship. The SPH has established formal **Service-Learning Agreements (SLA)** with known sites for responsibility and liability purposes. **An SLA must be in place with the field practice site before a student can start working and be covered under the university's Student Academic Field Experience for Credit Liability Insurance Program (SAFECLIP).** See a *listing* of current sites/projects with agreements on file here:
<https://bfa.sdsu.edu/financial/procurement/servlearning.aspx>

IMPORTANT: If site is not on the list, the student or site contact should reach out to the Applied Practice Advisor to initiate the process. **Please allow up to 4 weeks.**

4. How do I find an internship site?

It is recommended to plan at least 3-4 months ahead of the semester you plan to do your internship. The process of searching, interviewing and securing an internship can take more time than you think, especially if you are hoping to find a paid position or a competitive position such as the County Health & Human Services Agency or a hospital.

- [SPH Internship/Job Hub \(Google Drive Folder\)](#)
Only current students with an SDSU Gmail address can access this folder where internship/job opportunities are posted weekly. **NOTE:** You must be in your SDSU google profile to open up this Google Drive (not accessible using personal email address).
 - In addition internship opportunities are announcements in Canvas. You should have access to the [SPH Undergrad Homeroom on Canvas](#). If you do not have access, please reach out to the Applied Practice Advisor.
 - Sign up for postings from SDSU Career Services by registering for [Handshake](#). You will also be able to search for internships and jobs, set up interviews and sign up for workshops.
 - Review the [List of Sites with Service Learning Agreements](#) on file and begin researching/reaching out to organizations/companies to inquire: <https://qsph.sdsu.edu/fieldpractice/students/preparing.php>
 - Attend/Participate in Career Fairs and other Professional Development Events around the County.
 - Attend Community Collaborative meetings around the County to network and learn more about local organizations and internship/job opportunities: <https://www.sdcoe.net/student-services/student-support/Pages/san-diego-county-community-collaboratives.aspx>
- OR** find more by doing a Google Search with key words: “Community Collaboratives San Diego”
- Follow local organizations/agencies on social media – look out for announcements and networking opportunities they post and get involved!
 - Ask other students or professors for ideas

5. Can I do my internship outside of San Diego?

Students may do their internship outside of San Diego (within the U.S.); however, a Service Learning Agreement (SLA) is required. International experiences such as Study Abroad opportunities with public health focus may be approved and count towards fulfilling the international requirement; however, these are approved on a case-by-case basis. Criteria may include but not limited to SPH faculty-led program with a trip duration of 3+ weeks, thorough description of project, duties and schedule, program objectives and requirements align with the School of Public Health.

6. What should I look for in an internship site/project?

A quality field practice experience is dependent on how prepared a student is. Therefore, careful attention and sufficient time should be invested in selecting the right site. When choosing a field practice site, the student should ask themselves a number of questions (see #3 above for approval criteria to help inform decision):

- a. Does the agency/project qualify as an appropriate public health field practice? (Are the duties/responsibilities appropriate based on the my educational/career goals and interests?)
- b. Will I be able to apply what I am/have been learning in my academic program?
- c. Will I learn a new skill(s) that I have wanted to learn?
- d. Is the work setting/environment a good fit with my personality?
- e. Will I have the opportunity to participate in trainings, conferences or other professional development events?
- f. Does the Field Practice Supervisor have sufficient time and interest in being a supervisor/mentor?
- g. Will I be able to meet the time commitment and expectations of the field site?

7. Should I be paid for the internship?

Internships can be paid or unpaid. Ideally, it would be great if all organizations/companies offered paid internships, however, this is just not the case the majority of the time. While we hope this changes it is important to keep in mind that the main purpose of an internship is to learn valuable knowledge and experience. If an internship is unpaid, it is usually subject to strict labor guidelines. U.S. federal law, for example, mandates that unpaid interns cannot not benefit the company economically or be used to displace the work done by paid employees. In addition, some states have their own regulations regarding unpaid interns. For example, unpaid interns in California must receive college credit for their work in lieu of pay. Check this article out for more info: <https://www.fastweb.com/career-planning/articles/let-s-get-legal-guidelines-for-paid-or-unpaid-internships>

There are many benefits beyond compensation that should be considered:

- **Gain valuable work experience** - The hands-on work experience interns receive is invaluable and cannot be obtained in a classroom setting, making this one of the most important benefits of internships.

- **Explore a career path** - Exploring is an important part of the college experience, and internships are a great way for students to acquaint themselves with the field they are interested in without long-term commitment.
- **Give yourself an edge in the job market** - One of the most important internship benefits is that college graduates who already have some work experience in the form of an internship stand out to potential employers. Internship experience makes a college grad more marketable as they usually require less training and can handle more responsibilities. You may also receive a higher starting salary than those who do not have internship experience and are entering the workforce or starting a new career.
- **Develop and refine skills** - You can learn a lot about your strengths and weaknesses during an internship. Internships allow for feedback from supervisors and others who are established in the field and offer a unique learning opportunity. Embrace the mistakes you make as an intern. This is the time when they are expected and accepted more than any other time in your work experience.
- **Network with professionals in the field** - In the working world, it's all about who you know. As an intern, you will be surrounded by professionals in the industry. Internships are more than just about earning credit, getting a grade, or making money; internships provide an opportunity to learn from the people around you, ask questions, and impress. The professionals you encounter during an internship can be your future colleagues or the connection to your first job.
- **Transition into a job** - Many companies use internships as a way to enhance their recruitment efforts. In some cases, a company may decide to hire an intern at the end of the assignment. Even if a job offer doesn't happen right away, an intern who makes a favorable impression could receive an offer down the line when an opening occurs.

8. What are the steps to registering for PH 497 credit?

Step 1: Plan ahead! Make sure you know what semester you are eligible to enroll in PH 497 and decide what semester (Fall, Spring or Summer) fits best with your planned schedule. See the advising sheet for guidance: <https://publichealth.sdsu.edu/programs/bs-public-health/bachelors-curriculum/>

Step 2: Begin your search for a field site well in advance of registering for the class. You can request approval of a site at any time. For example: Let's say you find an internship during the middle of fall semester, you can get approval, start counting the hours then register in the spring semester.

Step 3: Request for site approval & registration

Once you have been offered a position you can request approval of your field site/project: <https://gsph.sdsu.edu/fieldpractice/students-undergrad/apply.php>

APPROVAL PROCESS:

IMPORTANT: The deadline to submit for approval of your field site/internship OR to begin the registration process is generally 7 business days prior to the University's Add/Drop date in the semester you are seeking PH 497 credit.

Once you submit the online Request for Internship Approval the following actions will follow:

1. You will receive an Automatic Notification from the online system indicating your request has been submitted.
2. You will receive a second automatic notification when it has been approved; however, this is conditional.
3. You will receive an email from Leticia Cazares, the Advisor/Instructor with additional information and instructions to provide two documents 1) Liability Waiver and 2) Internship Agreement. **If you do not receive this in 7 business days from the time you receive the automatic notification please email her at lcazares@sdsu.edu**
4. Within 7-10 business days, you should receive an email from SPHspecialregistration@sdsu.edu with your schedule number. You must use this number to officially register for the course in WebPortal by the Add/Drop date. **If you do not receive this in 7 business days, email SPHspecialregistration@sdsu.edu**
5. In the week leading up to the first week of classes of the semester you are registered in, you will receive an invite to access the PH 497 Canvas Room. Here is where you will upload final log of hours.

If you do not receive approval email, you are not approved and therefore any hours you have worked will not be counted for PH 497 credit. Therefore, it is important to stay on top of this!

9. What if I do not finish the required 144 hours by the end of the semester I register in?

If there is a point in which you anticipate not being able to complete the hours by the semester deadline then it is recommended to contact the Applied Practice Advisor immediately to discuss options. A last resort is that the student will receive an *Incomplete* for the course until the hours are completed.

The ***Incomplete*** grade is a temporary placeholder until all hours are completed (maximum time to complete the course/hours is one year). This does not affect your GPA, standing or financial aid however it may affect graduation date (i.e. if you applied for Spring graduation then you may need to change it to Summer). An agreement will be sent to you with more information but

essentially once you finish your hours you must notify the Applied Practice Advisor AND upload your final log and evaluations to Canvas course. Once completion has been verified, the Incomplete will be replaced with a letter grade within 2 weeks.

10. Can I get credit at my place of employment?

In some cases, yes. If the student currently works in a public health role or project, the Applied Practice Advisor may approve PH497 credit at the worksite if the student can demonstrate that the experience aligns with the [BSPH Competencies](#). If the student has been employed for six months or more, they will have to find a project or have duties that are outside of their currently assigned work duties. It is the responsibility of the student to negotiate a reassignment of work tasks and provide, through documentation, evidence that this concern has been satisfied. Students can petition for this option by submitting the ***Employer/Preceptor Verification of Field Practice*** form that is signed by both the student and direct supervisor.

IMPORTANT: Clinical positions involving individualized patient care are NOT appropriate internships unless the primary project for credit is more aligned with public health learning objectives/competencies.

11. What is the role of the Applied Practice Advisor and what can they help me with?

The Applied Practice and Professional Development Advisor is responsible for the overall development, implementation and evaluation of the SDSU School of Public Health Field Placement program. In partnership with the faculty, students and external public health organizations, the Advisor works to align public health competencies, student learning objectives, preceptor needs, requirements and standards to inform the creation of high quality competency-based applied experiences and professional development opportunities. Core functions include field site recruitment, education and technical assistance; internship opportunity development; student advising and guidance counseling; program development and evaluation, administrative design and compliance.

The Advisor assists with maintaining an active list of available and qualified field practice sites for SPH undergraduate and graduate students but does not place students. She is responsible for sending out internship announcements via school communications (email, listserv and Blackboard postings), making referrals based on individual advising sessions and creating other learning/networking opportunities such as career fairs, professional development panels, workshops and other applied experiences. She is available to students for one-on-one advising to assist students with aligning personal interests/values, skill sets, professional background, strengths and career goals.

Contact:

Leticia Cazares, MPH

Applied Practice Advisor/PH 497 Instructor

LCazares@sdsu.edu

<https://gsph.sdsu.edu/fieldpractice/index.php>

