CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE
The Capstone experience includes a capstone project, one-on-one meetings with faculty advisors, in-person sessions to build presentation skills and oral and poster presentations at the Public Health Forum.

Goal of Capstone Project
Goal: The goal of the capstone project for the MPH student is to connect all aspects of the curriculum, including: seminars, lectures, course work, independent studies, projects and direct experiences to establish an understanding, appreciation and working knowledge of public health practice, and specifically, how their specific concentration enhances public health practice opportunities in Colorado, the nation and the world.

Rationale: Students may see courses or other structured learning opportunities conducted in the confines of a specific syllabus and a short dedicated time frame as independent sessions and may store away the skill sets acquired during these structured sessions only to use them again under limited circumstances. However, it is the intent of the MPH program that each course and skill set be presented and practiced to complement and enhance others and, consequently, not stand alone. Individual courses are necessary to establish basic knowledge and skills in small enough bites that they can be absorbed and practiced, often in isolation. While the practicum provides an opportunity to observe the broad spectrum of public health knowledge and skills in practice, the Capstone project provides the opportunity for the student to link the theory, philosophy and knowledge from courses with real-life observations from the practicum to develop a program, policy or other concrete product relevant to public health in the student’s area of interest and future practice.

Guiding/Core Values
1. The capstone project should reflect the student’s broad knowledge of the Public Health system and the special role that their selected concentration plays in accomplishing the ideals of public health practitioners.
2. The capstone project must relate the acquired skills from the student’s MPH concentration to the overall goals of public health practice.
3. As the core MPH and concentration-specific courses in the MPH program provide input and guidance for selecting and conducting a successful MPH practicum, the practicum experience will generally provide the idea and issues for the Capstone project. Since students invest 120 hours into the practicum, we should capitalize on this experience and gain efficiency for the faculty and student by using the practicum to launch the Capstone experience.
4. A student may choose to do a capstone project that does not relate to their practicum if another proposed project better meets their interests and career goals.
5. In order to adequately gauge the success of the project in fulfilling the goals of the capstone project and ultimately prepare students for careers in public health, the project should be critically reviewed by appropriate faculty (and practice preceptor) before enrollment in the Capstone course.
6. While the course is planned to be completed in one semester, the course director(s) can assign an incomplete grade and allow additional time if needed, up to one academic year. Students should note that additional registration with credits not applicable toward graduation, will be required if they are not enrolled for any other credits during the completion semester(s).

Capstone Experience Objectives:
1. To develop products that can be added to the student’s portfolio, documenting her/his reasoning, decision-making, analytical and authorship skills as they relate to linking important public health projects to the MPH learning objectives and competencies.
2. To provide an independent but guided opportunity for the student to practice and document the role that their specific concentration skills play in public health practice.
3. To develop awareness of personal strengths and competencies as a public health professional.
4. To improve skills related to presenting project results in oral and written formats.

MPH Competencies
MPH competencies will vary according to the project and the area of concentration. Students should consult with Concentration Directors in their areas and refer to the Practicum Resource Guide: [www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/Academics/academics/Documents/PoliciesHandbooks/F14%20Core%20Competencies.docx](http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/Academics/academics/Documents/PoliciesHandbooks/F14%20Core%20Competencies.docx) for MPH-general and concentration-specific competencies.

Completing the Capstone activities will specifically address the following Basic Public Health Competencies:
- Communicate effectively both in writing and orally.
- Effectively present accurate demographic, statistical, programmatic and scientific information for professional and lay audiences.
- Identify and address ethical issues that arise in public health practice and research.
- Work collaboratively in a culturally sensitive manner with heterogeneous groups to promote the health of communities.
- Identify and evaluate a range of approaches that can be used to address public health questions, including geographic information systems, medical informatics and bioinformatics strategies, and community-based participatory research.
- Understand and utilize leadership, team building, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills to build partnerships for the purpose of improving the public’s health.
- Appreciate the importance of working collaboratively with diverse communities and constituencies.
- Discuss the importance and characteristics of a sustainable diverse public health workforce.
Guidelines for students selecting projects
While in rare instances, the student can petition to do a more structured project, it is highly recommended that the student identify a project that has a scope of work that can be completed in one semester (16 weeks and 60 hours approximately). The student should have a defined project with a project summary of the research or discussion question and proposed scope/plan of work drafted before the class begins. In order to optimize the student’s public health experience in our program, it is strongly recommended that the project be related to, emanate from or culminate the efforts and work of the practicum experience. Optimally, the student would have developed a research question, thesis or discussion topic from the practicum and have a description developed as part of the practicum final grade.

Projects should be specific to the student’s MPH concentration, but they may take on many different structures and formats based on the specific experiences. Completed projects should demonstrate acquisition of MPH and concentration/focus area-specific competencies. A tangible product is expected at the end of the capstone experience. Examples of projects include but are not limited to the following:

Grant Development
A student may choose to develop a grant proposal that would include all elements of a scientific research plan: research question, hypothesis, specific aims, literature review, study design, analysis plan, significance, and limitations. The topic of the grant should be one with public health significance.

Data analysis and report
A student may choose to perform a report of data addressing a public health problem. The analysis might include development of the research question and study design, developing the analysis plan and performing the analysis, and/or interpretation of the data analysis.

Capacity building project
A student may develop and/or a capacity building project that assists organization and institutional development in order to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate prevention programs and services. The final product could be a report providing direction for future capacity building, or an evaluation of current capacity building activities.

Epidemiologic Research
A student may choose to develop and implement an epidemiologic research project. This may include the development of the study design, collection of data, and final analysis. The types of projects may include but are not limited to surveillance reports, outbreak investigations, and identification of risk factors related to disease development or worsening.
Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation
A program planning capstone might involve the development of a plan to implement a public health program, the implementation of the plan, or the evaluation of the program. The project could address critical issues such as management, fiscal, ethical and logistical issues, or the evaluation/monitoring of an existing public health program, such as process evaluation, monitoring of outputs and outcomes, impact assessment, and/or cost analysis.

Survey research
The capstone project may include the creation and/or implementation of a survey in the public health community, and might include the development of the analysis plan, and the analysis and interpretation of the results. The survey would address issues of public health importance.

Community assessment
A student may choose to complete a community assessment to characterize the social, economic, and environmental status of a community. The project might include a description of the local and national data resources, development of tools to collect information from the community, implementing focus groups and key-informant interviews, and analysis and synthesis of data collected.

Health policy statement/advocacy
A capstone project could involve analysis of the public health implications of a current or proposed health policy or advocacy plan. The project could include perspectives on economics and financing, need and demand, politics/ethics/law, or quality/effectiveness.

Health Communications
The student may create a public health communication campaign focused on preventing disease, promoting health, or influencing health policies. They may also create communication plans that increase individual’s ability to search for health information or gain access to public health and health care systems. The project could also include applications to telehealth.

Requirements for initiation of Capstone Project:
- Progress toward completion of Practicum (may be some overlap)
- A proposal for a project/report
  - Consultation with your preceptor is required. The preceptor must sign the proposal which confirms they support the project and understand the role of a preceptor.
  - Consultation on the project should be provided by the CSU Program Director or the Associate Director who will assign a grade.
A signed Project Summary form by the CSU Program Director or Associate Director as well as the preceptor is required prior to the first day of the project.

- If you plan to travel abroad to complete your capstone, you must visit: http://studioabroad.colostate.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.ViewProgram&Program_ID=11482.
- Click the “Apply Now” button to create an application for “IE - Public Health (MPH) Practicum” using the appropriate program term.
- Complete the following sections: Learning Content, Signature Documents, Material Submissions, Application Questionnaires.
  - For questions about the international application process, please contact:

  Courtney Niebrzydowski  
  Education Abroad Coordinator  
  Office of International Programs  
  Tel: 970.491.4334, Fax: 970.491.5501  
  courtney.niebrzydowski@colostate.edu

Summary of Capstone Activities Requirements:
1. Attend specified individual sessions with faculty advisor
2. Attend a practice session for the oral presentation
3. Develop a final “culminating experience” reflective report (10 - 12 pages, double-spaced, 11-12 point type) that describes the capstone project (or other product) and discusses the integration of public health competencies.
4. Develop and display a professional quality poster (max of 28x42 landscape; generally use between 35 & 45 point font in PowerPoint template for general text; can be larger font for headings) presentation of the capstone project at the Public Health Forum held at the end of each semester.
5. Write an abstract for the project presentation, not to exceed 250 words (see template).
6. Develop and deliver a 15-minute oral presentation of the capstone project at the Public Health Forum held at the end of each semester.

Final presentation of the project and paper:

Each student will develop from the capstone project a poster presentation and a 10-15 minute oral presentation (with a written structured abstract to include in the printed program) for a Public Health Forum held at the end of each semester. These presentations should be of the quality expected for a professional or scientific meeting.

Additionally, the student will prepare a 10-12 page report that describes the project (3-4 pages) and discusses the integration of public health competencies into the capstone project and preparation for future professional activities (6-8 pages). The paper is to be turned in to the Faculty Advisor and the Academic Support Coordinator.

The project description portion of the paper may be an adaptation of materials prepared for the capstone project agency or program but should include relevant...
background, questions or hypotheses investigated, and methods used. For this report, students should consider both the competencies that they brought to their capstone project experiences from MPH class work and the further development of competencies that occurred through the experience.

Questions to answer might include:
1. What is the public health importance of your project (the “so what” question)?
2. What is the importance to you of the selected competencies you describe?
3. What do you take away from the MPH experience?
4. How have the capstone project and your presentation of its results made you a better public health professional?

Responsibilities of Capstone Preceptor
The goal of the capstone project for the MPH student is to connect all aspects of the curriculum, including: seminars, lectures, course work, independent studies, projects and direct experiences to establish an understanding, appreciation and working knowledge of public health practice, and specifically, how their specific concentration enhances public health practice opportunities in Colorado, the nation and the world.

The capstone project should contribute to the needs of an organization (please refer to the guiding/core values on the first page).

The primary responsibilities of a host site and preceptor are to:

- Work with students to develop a realistic graduate level project within the capstone time commitment and student schedule
- Be available to meet with student, provide supervision, and feedback
- Provide resources for students to complete project (i.e. office space, computer, access to data)
- Provide written feedback for the student and the school by completing a final evaluation form

Preceptor Benefits
The capstone experience adds great value to the student’s development and having a student professional also provides benefits to the host organization.

- Students complete or conduct projects the organization will hopefully be able to utilize
- Students provide an inquisitive approach and may provide creative ideas and solutions
- Students build professional capacity and gain new skills
- Organizations and preceptors have an impact on the field of public health by participating in the education of future professionals
Project Summary

Name: ____________________________________________________________

MPH Concentration (or dual degree program): _______________________

Title of project: _________________________________________________

Faculty Supervisor: ______________________________________________

Project Preceptor: _______________________________________________

Preceptor Organization: __________________________________________

Preceptor Address: ______________________________________________

Preceptor Telephone: _______ Preceptor Email: ______________________

Project topic:

Questions/hypotheses:

Methods (how/what are you doing? Describe the process, survey, population, statistical analyses, etc.):

What do you expect to learn from your project?

In 5 sentences, describe the Public Health Impact of your project.

11/16/2015
Anticipated product (e.g., report to an agency, tested intervention materials for dissemination, statistical/epidemiologic summary to inform practice or policy)

Timeline (when do you think you will complete the project?):

Potential problems/limitations:

Competencies brought to the project (what did you bring to this project, skills gained from the MPH courses you have taken)? Please list 5 key competencies.

Competencies to be gained through the project (what specific competencies will you be increasing?/gaining through this project)? Please list 5 key competencies, including 3 from within your concentration/focus area.

Signature of Faculty Advisor (Director or Assoc. Director) ___________________________________________ Date: _____________

Signature of Preceptor ___________________________________________ Date: _____________

Signature of Student ___________________________________________ Date: _____________
Capstone Project Abstract Template
250 Word Limit

PROJECT TITLE:

NAME:

BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION:

OBJECTIVES:

METHODS/PROCESS/STRATEGY:

RESULTS/OUTCOMES/PRODUCT:

CONCLUSIONS/FUTURE RESEARCH OR USE:

11/16/2015
Preceptor Final Evaluation of Capstone Student

Colorado School of Public Health

This form evaluates the student’s performance throughout the capstone experience

Instructions:
• The Preceptor should complete this form prior to meeting with the student.
• Please review this with the student before submitting the completed evaluation.

Preceptor:

Agency/Organization:

Student:

Start/End Date of Capstone Experience:

Please evaluate the student’s performance throughout the capstone experience.

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Are there other skills you’d like to comment on?

Would you like this student’s faculty advisor to contact you? ___Yes   ___No

11/16/2015