



Applied Practice Experience (APEX) Overview

The Applied Practice Experience (APEX) is a requirement of every Master of Public Health student. Students are required to engage in 100 hours with one partner organization, addressing the organization's identified needs. The project scope of the Applied Practice Experience (APEX) should be mutually beneficial to both the partner organization and the student.

APEX opportunities for UNMC students occur 3x annually (Spring, Summer, Fall). Typically, a student begins seeking opportunities about 2-3 months before the intended partnership begins. A student(s) may contact a partner organization to request more information about the potential opportunities for supporting their priority needs. If the opportunity is a good fit for both the student and the partner organization, the student will begin developing an APEX Learning Contract to outline the scope of the engagement together.

In the APEX Learning Contract, the student will be expected to describe the partner organization, involvement activities, products, timeline, and competencies to be met. The student will work with the preceptor and the Office of Public Health Practice to develop the APEX Learning Contract. Prior to the APEX beginning each semester, the Office of Public Health Practice hosts a student orientation and a preceptor orientation to further support the partnership for success.

APEX Timeline:

- The APEX should be completed in one semester.
- Students are encouraged to begin planning their APEX at least two months prior to the semester of intended registration.
- The APEX Learning Contract must be developed 4-5 weeks before the partnership begins.

Partner Organization Criteria:

- Applied practice experiences may involve governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial and for-profit settings or appropriate university-affiliated settings. To be appropriate for applied practice experience activities, university-affiliated settings must be primarily focused on community engagement, typically with external partners. University health promotion or wellness centers may also be appropriate.
- Partner Organization must provide space and resources required for the student to complete responsibilities as agreed upon in the APEX Learning Contract.
- If partner organization is also the student's employer, the scope of the APEX must fall outside of the student's/employee's job description and the direct supervisor can not serve as the preceptor.

Preceptor Criteria:

- The preceptor is an organization representative who holds at least a bachelor's degree with five years of experience in public health or a related field
- The preceptor must agree to the responsibilities described in the APEX Learning Contract

APEX Products:

- Students will identify two products to be left with the partner organization by the completion of the experience. Students will also be expected to share these products with the MPH program for review of their contribution to the partner organization.



- Product examples may include, but are not limited to the following; evaluation plan, health education materials, policy brief, grant database, survey development, update organization's promotional materials or website, development of printed or electronic promotions materials, multi-media presentations, videos, etc.

APEX Fast Facts:

- The student's involvement activities should be mutually beneficial to both the partner organization and the student.
- Applied Practice Experience activities must focus on Foundational Competencies and should not exclusively be concentration specific. Students can have no more than 1 competency from each domain area.
- Although students will only engage with one partner organization, opportunities to support or participate with other external stakeholders are welcomed.

Student Responsibilities:

- Meet all course prerequisites to register
- Maintain regular (weekly) communication with the preceptor
- Maintain professionalism, confidentiality and ethical standards of conduct
- Participate in any on-boarding activities at the site as appropriate
- Complete and submit required deliverables of this experience into the APEX course in Canvas. Deliverables may include, partnership trailer videos, project reflections, products, competency assessments, Ignite presentation, and final evaluations
- Notify the Senior Associate Dean and the Service Learning Programs Manager with any problems or concerns during the experience

Preceptor Responsibilities:

- Maintain regular communication with the student
- Supervise student activities at the placement site, as appropriate
- Serve as a role model for professional work habits, attitudes and ethics
- Review the student's critical reflections and complete evaluations of the student's performance as requested during the experience.
- Notify the Senior Associate Dean and Service Learning Programs Manager with any problems or concerns during the experience

Office of Public Health Practice Responsibilities:

- Maintain regular communication with the student
- Maintain regular communication with the preceptor
- Conduct APEX orientations and debrief sessions with all parties during the partnership
- Address problems or concerns from the student and/or preceptor

Additional Information or Questions:

For more information, please contact UNMC, College of Public Health, Office of Public Health Practice.

Laura Vinson, MPH
Programs Manager, Service Learning or
laura.vinson@unmc.edu
402-559-4191

Brandon Grimm, PhD, MPH
Senior Associate Dean
blgrimm@unmc.edu
402-559-5645