



EMORY

ROLLINS
SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC
HEALTH

Applied Practice Experience (APE) Field Supervisor Handbook

Office of Career Development
Rollins School of Public Health

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The Applied Practice Experience (APE)

All students enrolled in a degree-seeking MPH or MSPH program at the Rollins School of Public Health (RSPH) must pursue opportunities to integrate and apply practical skills and training learned through coursework in a professional public health work environment. This is a great opportunity for students to gain valuable work experience and apply their skills and knowledge to address public health issues.

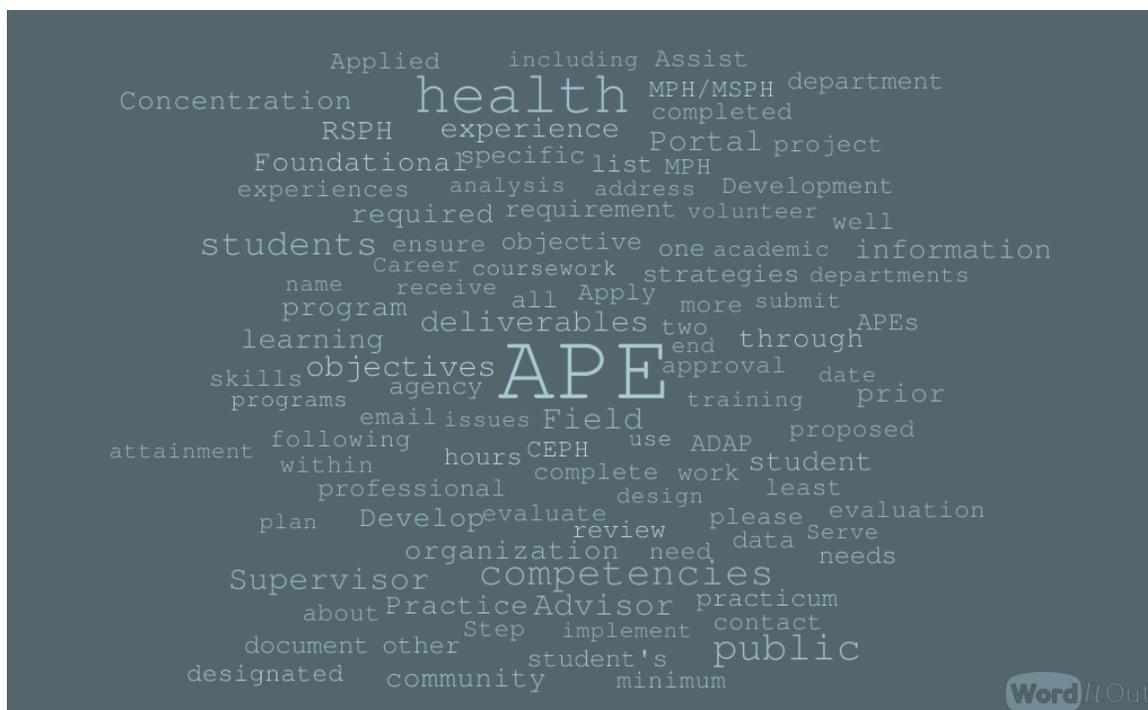
Over the years, domestic and international agencies and organizations have hired students from the RSPH for various types of opportunities, including full-time, part-time, fellowships, internships, etc. Many of these projects and opportunities meet the expectations for the APE requirement.

What is an Applied Practice Experience?

An APE is a unique opportunity that enables students to apply practical skills and knowledge learned through coursework to a professional public health setting that complements the student's interests and career goals. The APE must be supervised by a Field Supervisor and requires approval from an APE Advisor designated by the student's academic department at RSPH.

For a student to successfully complete the APE requirement, they must:

- a) Complete of a minimum of 200 hours in one or two public health agencies, institutions or communities
- b) Meet several student-selected MPH/MSPH foundational competencies and concentration competencies
- c) Produce at least 2 deliverables that benefit the APE agency
- d) Enter and track all APE-related information, deliverables and required approvals in the RSPH APE Portal



Roles and Responsibilities of the Field Supervisor and Organization

The Field Supervisor, sometimes known as a preceptor or site supervisor, oversees, supervises and evaluates the student's work at the APE field site. The Field Supervisor serves as a liaison between the school and worksite, providing direct supervision to the student. Often, Field Supervisors also serve in a mentoring role, providing the student with valuable guidance, insight and lessons that can only be gleaned from years of professional experience. Field Supervisors should have working knowledge of the public health organization/agency, the community being served and content expertise. Field Supervisors must have a Master of Public Health degree, a Master's Degree in a related field, or the equivalent combination of education and experience.

The student will work collaboratively with their Field Supervisor to outline achievable MPH/MSPH foundational and concentration competencies, learning objectives and strategies as well as relevant deliverables.

Field Supervisors are responsible for:

- ✓ Assisting the student with developing mutually agreeable goals, objectives, strategies and deliverables prior to the start of the experience;
- ✓ Completing the Field Supervisor Profile (contact info, credentials and work-setting/content experiences) in the APE Portal;
- ✓ Approving the APE project, competencies, objectives/strategies and projected deliverables in the APE Portal prior to the start of the APE;
- ✓ Remaining available to supervise and provide guidance to the student during the experience;
- ✓ Re-approving changes to the APE project in the APE Portal, if necessary;
- ✓ Providing feedback to the student in one-on-one meetings (ideally at the midway point and again at the end of the experience); and
- ✓ Completing the Field Supervisor evaluation form online at the end of the experience.

Benefits of becoming a Field Supervisor

- ✓ Aid students in fulfilling their APE requirement
- ✓ Benefit from students offering support on current projects
- ✓ Raise awareness of the organization
- ✓ Reserve the opportunity to hire the best candidate(s)
- ✓ Serve as a valuable mentoring resource to the RSPH
- ✓ Contribute to the development of new public health professionals

APE Process

The APE requirement is completed through a series of steps including documenting information, approvals and evaluations at set time points in the process. The information outlined below provides more details on the process from start to finish.

1. Initial Contact

APE opportunities may be developed through a number of different ways. Typically, opportunities are sought after in these ways.

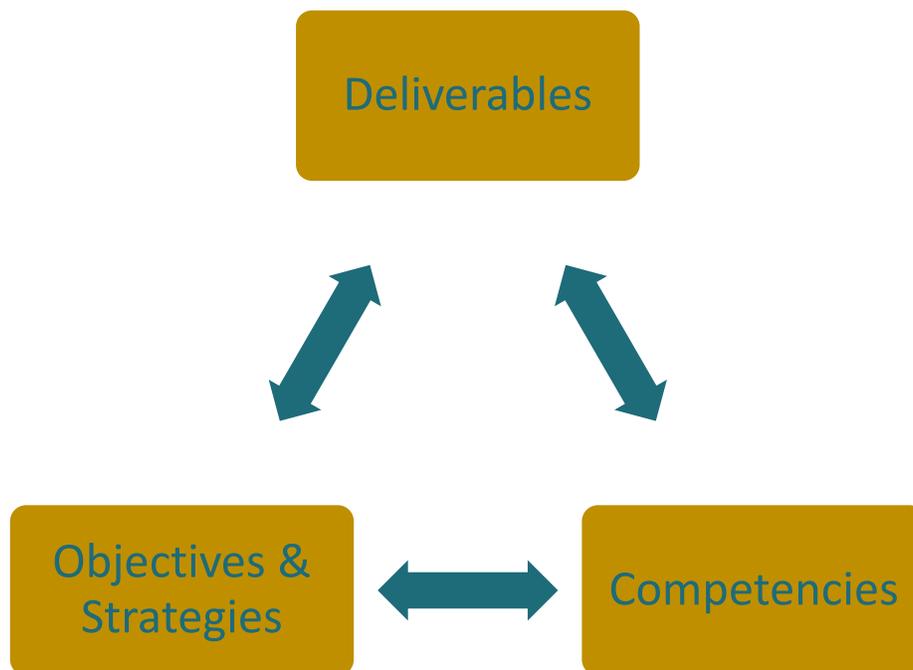
- a) A student may contact a potential Field Supervisor to discuss the possibility of an APE experience;
- b) A job opportunity is posted to a posting site and a candidate is identified from the applicants;
- c) A student heard about an opportunity through word of mouth and was connected with the point of contact;
or
- d) A student met a public health professional while attending a networking event and they maintained contact following the event.

For information on advertising available job opportunities, please see the section called [Advertising an Opportunity](#) later in this handbook.

2. Establish APE Objectives/Strategies, Expected Deliverables and Competencies

All APEs require goals that are mutually agreed upon between the Field Supervisor and the student. The time to complete the objectives, deliverables and attain selected competencies is the length of time the student will work with the organization. There are examples of objectives and strategies that RSPH students have submitted in the past on the page titled [Examples of Objectives & Strategies](#).

When meeting with a student to discuss a potential project, the potential Field Supervisor can request the student bring a copy of the [APE Student and Field Supervisor Worksheet](#) to use as a guide for the meeting and ensure all expectations are discussed. The form is available on the APE website.



3. Data Input by Student

To document student APE experiences, the RSPH maintains an electronic APE Portal. Information documented in the APE portal includes the student's work site, APE objectives/strategies, expected deliverables, competencies, Field Supervisors' qualifications, hours worked and student and Field Supervisor's evaluation of the experience. The portal enables the school to monitor how the APE requirements are being met and allow electronic monitoring and approval at various steps. Information entered into the APE Portal is available for review by the department Assistant/Associate Director of Academic Programs (ADAP) and APE Advisor [Definitions of these and other key terms are found in the [Glossary](#) section later in this handbook.]. The portal is searchable and allows the school to monitor where students have had professional experiences. The portal also serves as a resource for future students seeking opportunities.

Before the start of an APE, the student will complete the site information in the APE Portal, including:

- a) Organization name,
- b) Position title,
- c) Name and email address of their Field Supervisor,
- d) APE objectives with strategies for achieving each of the objectives,
- e) Foundational and concentration competencies
- f) List of expected deliverables.

4. APE Advisor Approval

After the student submits their APE information, their designated APE Advisor will receive an email asking them to review and approve (or if changes need to be made, deny with comments) the proposed APE competencies, learning objectives, strategies and deliverables.

5. Field Supervisor Approval

Once the APE site information, competencies, learning objectives and strategies, and deliverables have been approved by the APE Advisor, the Field Supervisor will receive an email requesting their review and approval (or if changes need to be made, deny with comments) of the proposed APE competencies, learning objectives, strategies and deliverables.

Following the approvals from the APE Advisor and Field Supervisor, the student may begin their APE and hours will begin to count toward the APE requirement. The student should be using a clocking system or other means of keeping track of their APE hours (i.e. Kronos, Excel template available online, etc.).

6. Midpoint Check-in with Student

Midway through the student's APE, the Field Supervisor will be sent an email asking them to meet with the student to provide constructive feedback and review progress made up to that point. If necessary, this is the point where objectives/strategies, expected deliverables and competencies can be changed.

The student will also receive an automated notification to enter their midpoint hours and make any necessary changes they have discussed with their Field Supervisor. If changes are necessary, approval for the changes will be required and an automated email notification will be sent to the Field Supervisor for additional approval.

7. Two Week Reminder

About 2 weeks prior to the end of the APE, Field Supervisors and students will be reminded to log back into the APE Portal at the end of the student's experience to complete the evaluations, which includes assessing the achievement of objectives, competencies, deliverables, and the student's overall professionalism and performance.

8. Student Evaluation

The student must complete the Student Evaluation before the Supervisor Evaluation will activate. The student will have the opportunity to:

- a) Assess the APE work site
- b) Assess achievement of objectives
- c) Assess competency attainment
- d) Provide copies of the deliverables
- e) Input the total number of hours completed at the APE worksite

9. Site Supervisor Evaluation

Once the student has submitted their evaluation in the APE Portal, their Field Supervisor will be prompted by email to log into the APE Portal to evaluate the student's APE performance. The specifics of the login and approval process will be provided in the email prompt.

10. Discussion of Evaluation

The Rollins School of Public Health strongly recommends and encourages Field Supervisors to meet with the student to discuss overall evaluation of the student's performance and provide constructive feedback beneficial to the student's professional and career development. The one-on-one evaluation should be similar to that of a performance evaluation that is typically expected to occur in the workplace.

11. Final Approval from APE Advisor

At the conclusion of the APE, the APE Advisor will review and provide final approval of the information the student entered into the portal and will certify that the student has attained the selected CEPH MPH/MSPH Foundational Competencies, Concentration Competencies, and uploaded acceptable deliverables. The APE Advisor will also review the student and supervisor evaluations to ensure the objectives and strategies were satisfactorily accomplished and mutually beneficial.

Establishing Work Standards

Students are valuable contributors in work settings that offer the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge from their courses. Depending on the student's prior experience in a work setting, it is important to clearly define expectations for work standards that are reasonable, attainable, and agency/organization appropriate. Below are some tips to assist Field Supervisors and employers with establishing work standards.

1. **Orientation:** Students need a basic orientation to the agency. Orientation may include: an overview of the mission of the agency or organization; guidelines and resources for performing assigned tasks; office policies and procedures, and professional dress code expectations. Additional orientation basics may include: introduction to others in the office with whom the student is likely to interact, a tour of the facilities, library and demonstration on office equipment use.
2. **Adequate work resources:** Students need to have access to the resources needed to accomplish the APE objectives. Resources may include desk and computer, phone with appropriate access to long distance calls, a name badge, access card(s), time sheets or other items as deemed necessary.
3. **Assignments:**
 - a. Students perform at their best when provided with defined timelines. Depending on the time of year, the student may also be juggling course attendance and assignments with the APE opportunity. Timelines help assure that competing priorities are able to be managed and completed on time.
 - b. Students benefit from experiencing the internal operations of the worksite that may go beyond the APE objective, including opportunities to observe management discussions, participate in strategic planning, and attend seminars.
 - c. Students benefit from being able to apply what they have learned in graduate school to the operations of the agency. They also benefit from being exposed to opportunities that challenge them beyond their comfort zone.
4. **Regular Contact and Supervision:** The student and their Field Supervisor should plan opportunities to meet regularly to review APE project progress throughout their time with the agency.
 - a. **Developing Work Plans:** The student should work with the Field Supervisor to develop objectives for the APE project and form a work plan that is achievable. The work plan ideally should expose the student to a broad range of activities and decision-making processes and give the student some in-depth exposure to issues pertinent to the agency or organization's activities.
 - b. **Regular Meetings:** The subject matter of these meetings may include evaluating the student's performance over the course of the prior week, discussing the activities of the agency or organization, and analyzing particular successes and problems that arise over the course of the APE. The Field Supervisor might also assist the student in developing insights into public health practice, organization's work, and otherwise provide guidance that can assist the student in launching their career. This kind of mentoring can have tremendous educational value to the student, transcending even the value of the professional practical experience the student gains through the APE.
 - c. **Evaluation:** At the end of the APE, the Field Supervisor will be asked to complete an evaluation form assessing the student's performance. These forms are a part of the APE Portal. The Rollins School of Public Health strongly encourages Field Supervisors to schedule a one-on-one meeting with the student to discuss the evaluation and their work performance. The opportunity to provide constructive feedback can be a powerful learning experience for the student and mirrors what they can expect in the workplace.

Advertising an Opportunity

- Post available opportunities (including, part-time, full-time, fellowship, internship, etc.) directly to the school's Career Development job database, ROL Handshake at <https://www.sph.emory.edu/careers/employers/post-jobs/index.html>. If you have any questions, please email rsphpracticum@emory.edu.
- Recruit an individual student. You are welcome to work directly with an RSPH student to create an APE opportunity.
- Work directly with a department by contacting the Assistant/Associate Director of Academic Programs (ADAP) or the APE Advisor.



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General Questions

Does an APE need to be paid?

The APE can be a paid or volunteer (unpaid) experience. It is important that the experience offer the opportunity for students to demonstrate competency attainment and align with the student's career goals. Ideally, an opportunity will be a paid position for a student. However, depending on financial needs, some students may be willing to work in unpaid opportunities if the project is closely aligned with their career goals and interests.

For organizations or Field Supervisors who need assistance with determining a fair pay rate, the RSPH Office of Career Development can provide assistance.

When do students usually complete their APE?

If the position is full-time, most students complete their APE during the summer between their first and second year of graduate school. If the position is part time, the APE may be completed at any time after student completes a minimum of 9-credit hours at the RSPH.

Will my organization qualify as a potential APE site?

Any agency, institution or organization can be an APE site as long as they are public health practice-based, can ensure a safe and suitable work environment for the student and have a qualified Field Supervisor available to supervise the daily work of the student. For questions regarding the site's eligibility, please contact Career Development at rsphpracticum@emory.edu (404-727-9957) or one of the specific department contacts listed at the end of this handbook. Sample organizations of where past students have completed their APE are listed below:



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What makes a good APE objective?

Each APE should outline 3 – 5 SMART objectives linked to at least three (3) CEPH MPH/MSPH Foundational Competencies and two (2) Concentration Competencies. The Field Supervisor and student should construct and discuss objectives during their initial meeting to determine if the experience is appropriate for the APE requirement. Objectives should be written as SMART objectives, that is:

- **Specific** - A specific objective has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general one. To make an objective specific, make sure to include the Who, What, When, Where and Why (e.g. A general objective would be "Get in shape." A specific objective would be "I will join and attend a health club at least three times per week for three months in order to lose 15 pounds.")
- **Measurable** - Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each objective. Ask yourself "How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?" In the objective above, the 15 pounds is what makes it measurable.
- **Attainable** - Objectives should be achievable given the resources and time available.
- **Realistic** - Objectives are realistic when the skills needed to reach the objective are available and the goal fits with the overall strategy and goals of the organization.
- **Timely** - When setting objectives, you should ensure that there is an understanding of a begin date, end date, and how much time it will take to reach the objective within the timeframe. In the objective above, the 3 months is the time frame for achieving the goal.

Example of a SMART Objective:

By year two of the research project, 30 community volunteers will be trained to administer HIV testing services to members of the Augusta, GA community seeking services via the mobile health clinic.

What are some examples of acceptable deliverables?

Students should consult with their department to ensure the deliverables discussed with their Field Supervisor are acceptable for their department. **If documents are considered proprietary documents, the student and Field Supervisor should discuss and determine appropriate alternatives that can be uploaded to the APE Portal for completion of the APE requirement.** Deliverables may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Brochure	report	Quality Improvement Plan
Curriculum	Facilitating intervention (link to video)	Training guide/manual
Dashboard user guide	Link to a webpage designed by the student	Manuscript
Data Extraction, Collection & Analysis Report	Literature review	Research Study Proposal
Data analysis results or output	Monitoring & Evaluation Tool Development	Risk Assessment Analysis Report
De-identified data set	Multi-media presentations	Spreadsheets
Evaluation or evaluation plan	Policy Analysis	Standard Operating Procedures
Fact sheet for a target audience	PowerPoint Presentation	Statistical Analysis Plan
Health Resource Booklet	Program/Project Management Plan	Survey or data collection tool
Health Communications Plan		Written report
Key informant interview summary		

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What is the process if the organization requires an agreement or memorandum of understanding before the student can work on-site?

Some APE environments may have specific requirements, such as a background check (e.g. government clearance) or a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Emory. If an MOU is required, email a copy of the standard agreement document to Heather Zesiger at heather.zesiger@emory.edu. If the organization does not have an agreement drafted, Heather Zesiger can provide a copy of the standard Emory agreement.

Include the following information in the email to Heather Zesiger: full name of the point of contact at the organization for the agreement, organization name, phone number, email address, and full name of the student hire. It may take a couple months to review and establish the agreement between the RSPH and the organization. Therefore, please submit documents as early as possible to ensure completion prior to the proposed start date.



Glossary

Departmental Assistant/Associate Director of Academic Programs (ADAP)

ADAPs provide departmentally-based advisement to students. ADAPs monitor student progress from the point of admission through graduation and beyond, serving as an advocate based on individual student needs. ADAPs can help students think about possible APEs to meet their interests and career goals; however, it is not their responsibility to secure an APE for students. ADAPs will complete the final graduation check at the conclusion of the APE to ensure all approvals have been obtained by the student to certify successful completion of the APE requirement.

Note:

- The *EMPH Program* ADAP will register EMPH students for the APE course after the student completes the APE agreement form and all parties have signed.

APE Advisor

Each academic department will have a designated APE Advisor (some departments may have more than one) who will provide guidance and advice to students as they secure and/or create suitable APEs. The APE Advisor may be a faculty member in the student's department or another designated person qualified to serve in this role. The APE Advisor can help students resolve issues about appropriate APEs or resolve issues that might take place during the APE. The APE Advisor will review and approve student's APE plans prior to the start of the APE and will certify successful completion of this requirement at the conclusion of the APE.

Notes:

- Students enrolled in the *Hubert Department of Global Health* must complete the form and approval process through Canvas prior to accessing the APE Portal and entering information.
- Students enrolled in the *EMPH Program* must receive approval from your APE Advisor prior to accessing the APE Portal and entering information.

Field Supervisor

A Field Supervisor is an on-site supervisor that manages the APE of a student and oversees the day-to-day work of the student. This individual helps to mentor, supervise and direct the student's APE. The Field Supervisor must be qualified to evaluate the professional performance of the student, attainment of CEPH MPH/MSPH Foundational Competencies and Concentration Competencies, learning objectives, strategies and deliverables.

Applied Practice Experience (APE)

An Applied Practice Experience is a practice-based opportunity for graduate students to integrate and apply skills and training learned through coursework in a professional public health environment. The APE is a required element for professional public health degree students and is required for all RSPH MPH and MSPH students. Completion of a minimum of 200 hours in one or two APEs as well as a minimum of two (2) deliverables, attainment of three (3) MPH/MSPH foundational competencies and two (2) concentration competencies, and accomplishment of objectives and strategies are required prior to graduation. The intent is to expose graduate students to a variety of professional experiences in public health environments including not-for-profit organizations, hospitals, federal, state and local health departments, and for-profit firms.

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APE Portal

The APE Portal is an electronic database that students use to document information, track and receive approvals for APE opportunities. Students, ADAPs, APE Advisors and Field Supervisors all have access to the system in order to complete required steps in the APE process.

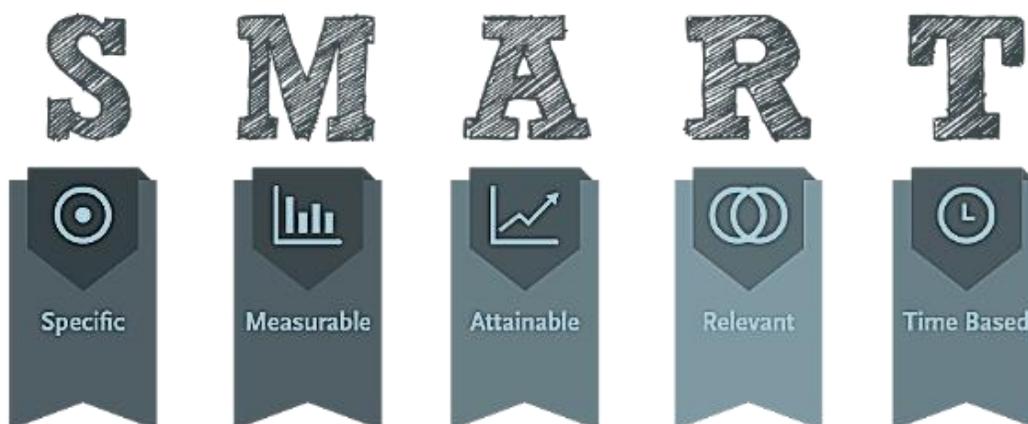
SMART Objectives

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Example of a SMART Objective:

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Examples of Objectives & Strategies

Example 1: Program Planning Intern, Community Agency

Objective: Assist the founder with the development of the Project Grow Program by assessing the need for the program in a southeast neighborhood of metro-Atlanta over a 4-month period.

Strategies:

- Teach middle school youth how to develop a PhotoVoice project on food justice.
- Develop a social marketing and communication plan.
- Gather input from the community on their progress of vegetable gardens.

Example 2: West Nile Virus Entomology Intern, Entomology Lab Field Project

Objective: Compare rural vs. urban habitats of mosquitos over the course of three months to assess lifespan based on habitat.

Strategies:

- Conduct entomological surveys multiple times over the course of the summer.
- Conduct a demographic and mobility survey.

Example 3: Instructional Design and Technology Intern, State Public Health Department

Objective: Develop self-paced, interactive multimedia instruction and training on malaria prevention in a web-based format to launch on the health departments website within 6-months.

Strategies:

- Develop storyboards for online e-learning courses and training.
- Integrate PowerPoint training slides into multimedia instruction.

Example 4: Student Intern, International Hospital Administrative Office

Objective: Create data collection tool for rapid assessment of hospital-based services in Afghanistan.

Strategies:

- Engage stakeholders for information on data needs.
- Collaborate with data base managers to create forms.

Example 5: Accreditation Communication/Marketing Intern, County Public Health Department

Objective: Assist the Communications and Marketing Department with the Public Health Department's efforts toward becoming accredited by the end of the fiscal year through conducting research on accreditation criteria and organizing current resources.

Strategies:

- Research media placement opportunities for stories about the accreditation process.
- Conduct research on community health assessment and community health improvement.
- Organize materials in an electronic resource library.

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Example 6: Behavioral Risk Factor Survey Intern, State Public Health Department

Objective: Conduct an analysis of 2012 BRFSS to assess access and usage of preventive services in the state of Georgia by young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years during the summer internship.

Strategies:

- Create draft BRFSS report with 2012 BRFSS data, including tables, charts and written information on summarizing findings
- Develop one-page fact sheets and data summaries to disseminate to stakeholders and general population



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Contact List

Please check <https://www.sph.emory.edu/rollins-life/community-engaged-learning/ape/contact/index.html> for the most up-to-date list of Department APE Advisors and ADAPs.

Should you have questions about the APE requirement or APE Portal, please contact:

Office of Career Development
rsphpracticum@emory.edu
404-727-9957