

University of North Dakota
College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines

Advanced Public Health Nurse Track
Overview of Practicum Courses

Students will complete practicum experiences in locations as close to their home community as possible. Sites for practicum experiences will vary, but may include local and state health departments, schools, shelters, non-profit agencies, and other community-based organizations. The focus of the practicum experiences are on population-based practice. Practicum sites must be approved by UND public health nursing faculty prior to placement.

The three practicum courses include:

- **N547 Advanced PHN Practicum I (4 cr)** Primary focus is on community/population assessment
- **N549 Advanced PHN Practicum II (3 cr)** Primary focus is on planning and implementation of evidence-based interventions
- **N592 Advanced PHN Practicum III (4 cr)** Primary focus is on program and organizational evaluation as well as public health nursing leadership.

Practicum Placement and Supervision

Practicum experiences are planned with either local preceptors working with students face-to-face in conjunction with distance faculty, or with faculty only supervising students from a distance. University of North Dakota public health nursing faculty will work with students and guide preceptors through interactive communication. Faculty is responsible for the overall supervision of students, regardless of the amount of preceptor involvement, and will make at least one site visit (either in person or “virtually” via internet) to each student during the course.

Two primary options for practicum placement are available:

- A) Placement in an agency where the student is already employed
- B) Placement in an agency where the student is not employed.

The decision for where to place the individual students will be made in collaboration with the student, APHN faculty, the APHN Track director, potential practicum sites, and other appropriate parties. All practicum hours must be completed outside of the student’s regular hours of employment (i.e. a student may not apply their regular work hours or effort to practicum hours)

Two supervision options are also available. These options are described below:

- A local preceptor who is an RN with a master’s degree in either nursing or public health AND is currently working in population-focused care.
- Supervision by a UND faculty member only.

Individual student professional experiences and current learning needs will guide choice of appropriate placement and supervision. Option A for agency placement is most appropriate for students who are currently working in an official public health agency. Option B is most appropriate for students who have limited or no public health nursing experience, and/or are not currently working in an official public

health agency. There will likely, however, be exceptions to these general guidelines. For example, a student who is currently working as a staff PHN at an official public health agency may find that it is not ideal to have practicum placement at his/her place of employment, based upon either student learning objectives or upon agency needs and priorities. Likewise, a student who is not currently employed at an official public health agency may still be able to have an appropriate population-focused experience with their current employer. Additionally, the type of supervision will be based upon an individual student's prior public health and/or population-focused experiences. For example, students who have limited or no prior public health experience will likely achieve optimal learning during the practicum by having a preceptor working with them face-to-face in addition to faculty supervision.

Practicum Contracts with Agencies

Contract agreements must be completed with the practicum agency prior to the beginning of the practicum experience. In order to allow sufficient time to secure agency contracts, students are required to identify a desired agency for their practicum experience at least one semester prior to the start of the practicum experience. This includes providing a contact name and number at the agency and also the names of any potential preceptors for the practicum experience. All agency placements must be approved by the UND practicum coordinator.

Practicum Hours

Required hours for practicum credits at UND are calculated at a 3:1 rate, based upon course credits: i.e. for each semester credit, three hours of practicum must be completed each week. The total number of hours of practicum in the APHN track meets the 500 hour requirement standard for advanced certification with the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

N547 Advanced PHN Practicum I (4 cr): Students will spend 12 hours/week for a total of 180 practicum hours over the semester)

N549 Advanced PHN Practicum II (3 cr): (Students will spend 9 hours/week for a total of 135 practicum hours over the semester)

N592 Advanced PHN Practicum III (4 cr): (Students will spend 12 hours/week for a total of 180 practicum hours over the semester)

Additionally, students will complete 15 hours of fieldwork in N572: Diverse Vulnerable Populations.

Practicum hours will be completed based on a schedule that is agreeable to the student, the clinical agency, preceptor, and faculty. Students will account for practicum hours, location, experiences and populations served each week as outlined within the course expectations. At the end of the semester, faculty will submit the logs of these practicum hours and experiences to the APHN Director so that the data may be aggregated and used for reporting purposes to accreditors, funding agencies, and others as required.

Clinical Conferences

Students will be required to participate in weekly clinical conferences via online interactive communication as outlined in the course schedule.