

School of Public Health

PUBH7044: Professional placement in Public Health – Student Handbook



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Who's Who

Placement Provider (PP)

The organisation at which the student undertakes his/her placement.

Placement Supervisor

An employee of the Placement Provider who will provide day-to-day supervision of the student, provide the Supervisor Evaluation, and sign-off on the attendance Timesheet.

Project Description

An outline of the duties, responsibilities and expected outcomes associated with the position / project that the student undertakes.

Course Coordinator (CC)

The UQ academic staff member who has responsibility for delivery of the course and its assessment.

Placements Officer/s

The UQ School of Public Health staff who administer the placement.

Contacts

Any questions can be directed to the Placements Officer

- E: SPHplacements@uq.edu.au

Course Coordinator:

Associate Professor Sheleigh Lawler

- E: s.lawler@sph.uq.edu.au
- T: 336 55512
- W: [Profile](#)

Introduction

PUBH7044 Professional Placement in Public Health

PUBH7044 Professional Placement in Public Health has been developed to provide final year students with hands-on experiences in a public health work environment. The course will draw from the students' accumulated knowledge and skills base and prepare them for future employment within the public health sector.

Learning Objectives

The aims of PUBH7044 are for students to:

- Demonstrate high level of interpersonal and communication skills in writing, oral and negotiation when engaging with internal and external stakeholders.
- Critically analyse information and data to provide evidence-based recommendations for colleagues, supervisors, and other stakeholders.
- Demonstrate strategic planning and project management skills, including applied knowledge of the coordination, development, implementation and evaluation of projects or public health programs.
- Apply time management skills to prioritise competing demands, adapt effectively to change, and complete tasks on time.

- Demonstrate relationship skills by identifying, negotiating, and work effectively with partners, stakeholders and colleagues.
- Understand and identify the role of various frameworks, guidelines and policies in addressing population health.
- An ability to reflect on personal skills and professional strengths and develop self-awareness.

Eligibility and Enrolment Process

To be eligible for PUBH7044 or Master of Environmental Health Sciences, students must be in their final semester of the MPH, have a GPA of at least 5.5, and a suitable placement position must be available. Some PPs have additional requirements, such as a current Blue Card, criminal history check, or immunisation schedule.

Students must complete an online Expression of Interest (EOI) and also attend a 10-minute online interview to discuss their placement preferences and career goals.

Any students with a current [Student Action Plan \(SAP\)](#) will be asked to provide a copy to ensure that PPs can accommodate any special requirements.

Eligible students will be advised in writing and only then may they enrol in the course via my-sinet.

Course Structure and Attendance

PUBH7044 has academic content and processes as well as committing students to 180 hours in a work placement over the course of the semester. Students will complete 13 weeks in the host organisation working the equivalent of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, two (2) days per week for the duration of the placement. Under some circumstances other arrangements can be negotiated but they must be discussed with the host organisation and approved by the University prior to the commencement of the placement. Students are required to keep a log or timesheet of their daily and accumulated hours and to have this signed off by their field supervisor.

Students are also required to attend PUBH7044 classes facilitated by the University on campus and to complete all assessment items for the course. These classes and assessments are in addition to the 180 hours required for the placement.

Payment

As per the [UQ policy](#), students must not receive any payment or reimbursement for the placement. Board and lodging may however be provided to students temporarily staying at remote locations.

Student Responsibilities

It is very important that you take your work placement responsibilities seriously and demonstrate professional behaviour at all times. Any unprofessional behaviour can result in immediate termination of the placement at the request of either the supervisor or the course coordinator. The main responsibilities of the student are to:

- Contact the placement supervisor to finalise the timing of the placement (dates and times).
- Complete all pre-requisites for the placement e.g. attend orientation, update immunisations.
- Attend placement on all agreed dates. If sick, running late, or otherwise unable to attend the placement, advise their Placement Supervisor as soon as possible.
- Complete and upload all assessment items by the due date.
- Contact the Course Coordinator or SPH placement administration team if there are any concerns about the placement. These could be safety concerns, concerns about the activities provided at the placement, or wellness concerns where the student feel they are struggling to complete the placement.
- Provide all documents to the placement supervisor. You may be required by your Placement Provider to sign an Intellectual Property (IP) agreement prior to commencing your placement. This will state that the work generated remains the property of the Placement Provider. Before entering into such an agreement, you have the right (and should) seek legal advice. One such source is the UQ Student Union. You can book an appointment here: uqu.com.au/student-support/legal

Dress Code

Placement sites may have a dress code which students will be required to meet. Please speak to your supervisor regarding appropriate dress code PRIOR to commencing your placement.

Punctuality

It is important that you turn up to your placement every day at the time agreed by your placement supervisor. If for reasons beyond your control, you are unable to arrive on time or you are unwell and cannot attend placement on a particular day, you must contact your placement supervisor as soon as possible. Make sure you have their email address and phone number programmed into your mobile so that you are able to contact them easily. It is good to plan to get to the placement early until you are confident with your transport, traffic and parking situations at the placement site.

Placement Orientation

All Placement Providers are required to provide students with an orientation in their first couple of days of placement. This will ensure that you are confident of the worksite rules and requirements to ensure safety, the emergency and evacuation procedures, and first aid provisions. If you do not receive this you should ask your placement supervisor about it. If you feel unsafe in any way you can contact the UQ placement office immediately.

Occupational Health and Safety

Observing both UQ and your Placement Provider's OHS rules while on placement is vitally important.

- Ensure you are up to date with UQ modules accessed via [my-SI-net](#) and [Blackboard](#).
- Follow local policies and guidelines. If you do not know what to do, ask for advice from your supervisor.
- Avoid placing at risk the health and safety of yourself or any other person.
- Report OHS issues or unsafe behaviour to your supervisor immediately.
- Wear the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) for the task e.g. appropriate clothing, eyewear, mask, gloves and enclosed footwear.
- Do not use damaged/faulty equipment or defective PPE.
- Inform your supervisor of any issues that may affect your ability to perform your activities safely during your placement.

Any incident, near miss, hazard or actual injury or illness must be reported as soon as practicable once medical attention has been given (if required) and the situation has stabilised.

We are aware that some incidents or events may be particularly sensitive, and that students may be reluctant to lodge a report in some circumstances. The Faculty of Medicine OHS team is available to confidentially discuss

concerns and discuss alternative methods of reporting. For further OHS information, assistance, support or advice email med.ohs@uq.edu.au.

Attitude

Placement is a great opportunity for you to work on your employability skills, put your technical knowledge from study into practice and to gain invaluable experiences that will help start your public health career. It is important to see all aspects of placement as opportunities to gain experience and do your very best. Feel free to ask questions so you can maximise your learning, it is up to you to ensure you get the most out of your placement.

Pre-Placement Checklist

1. Have you provided all documentation regarding the pre-requisites outlined in the Placement Project Outline provided by the placement supervisor?
2. Have you confirmed your start date and time with your placement supervisor?
3. Have you confirmed the correct address and place to meet your supervisor on your first day?
4. Are you confident you know how to get to your placement site and how long it will take you? It might be worth a practice run or leaving extra early to ensure you are there on time. You may also like to ask your supervisor what parking or public transport is best.
5. Do you have your supervisor's name and contact details plus an alternative contact programmed into your mobile or written down so that you can contact them if you have any issues leading up to the placement?

Placement Providers

A wide range of organisations provide placement positions. In prior semesters these have included:

- Governmental organisations ([Queensland Health](#))
- NGOs ([Red Cross](#), [Cancer Council Qld](#), [Institute for Urban Indigenous Health](#))
- Consultancies ([Beacon Strategies](#), [Enable Health Consulting](#))
- UQ business units ([UQ Respect](#), [Institute for Social Science Research](#))

Assessment

Course assessment includes:

- a goal-setting plan
- an interim and final self-reflection report (completed by the student and signed off by the supervisor)
- completed time-sheets
- final presentation

Further details will be made available on the [ECP](#) and course [Blackboard](#) site. It is also a condition of passing the placement that students complete the required number of placement hours.

The supervisor's role in assessment is limited, as the main responsibility of this lies with the student and the course coordinator. However, supervisors will be asked to sign-off on student timesheets, and meet with the student to discuss and provide feedback on their interim and final self-reflection reports. All supervisors will also be invited to attend the final presentation day for the students, held at UQ's Herston Campus.

At-risk students

If any difficulties arise while on placement, it is critical that they be raised as soon as possible so that they may be rectified in good time to allow you to meet requirements and pass the course. Either you or the Placement Supervisor should contact the Course Coordinator or Placement Officer in such circumstances. Issues that put a student at-risk of failing include:

- Not completing all 180 hours of placement.
- While students who fail an assessment may be eligible for supplementary assessment, that option is not available for any student that fails the placement itself.
- Unprofessional behaviour.
- Any serious breach of the UQ [Student Charter](#) or policy of the Placement Provider.
- Grossly unprofessional or hazardous behaviour that puts any person or organisation at risk of physical or reputational injury will lead to immediate failure and cessation of the placement.

