

Health Services and Policy Research Collaborative Program

Policy Practicum

Description

This practicum provides opportunities for HSPR Collaborative Program students to interact with policy makers or shapers. The major goal of the practicum is to understand the policy-making environment, the factors that shape it and gain experience and skills in working with policy makers. The practicum allows development of several competencies important to being an effective health services researcher. During the experience, students should have an opportunity to contribute to an aspect of the policy process by analyzing, synthesizing and/or transferring information relevant to a particular policy option under consideration. They should learn about the factors that shape the differing viewpoints of various stakeholders and how the policy development process works from initial formulation through implementation, review and revisions of policies.

Specific objectives are to allow students:

1. To better understand the policy making and shaping environment by examining the prerequisite conditions for and contextual influences on policy development, implementation and change related to a given policy or set of decisions influencing policy.
2. To examine the role of this particular organization in the policy arena.
3. To examine the role that different types of evidence, including research evidence, have in the development of and changes to a set of policies affecting an area of health services (e.g. human resources, mental health, child health, addictions etc.) of interest to the student.
4. To examine the role that the viewpoints of various stakeholders in the development/change to a specific policy.
5. To gain skills in analyzing, distilling and communicating relevant research findings to policy makers or shapers.
6. To interact with various levels of decision makers on a specific health policy issue that cut across different policy arenas.
7. To gain skills in working with policy makers and shapers.

Description of how the practicum will be implemented

The practicum will be spent with one of the decision-maker partners of the HSPR Collaborative Program. The practicum experience will usually occur over a four-month (one term) period. The student will work with their HSPR Collaborative Program mentor to identify an appropriate practicum site for the student and a supervisor at that site. Students will be assigned a mentor/supervisor at the particular policy site for the duration of their practicum that will meet with the student on a regular basis during the practicum along with the HSPR Collaborative Program mentor. For their practicum (a minimum of 200 hours over a 3-4 month period), students will be based in the work environment of the policy maker.

Each student is expected to develop a Learning Plan for the practicum. An initial Policy Practicum Learning Plan is to be drafted and discussed by the mentor and the proposed practicum supervisor in advance of the practicum start date. Proposed learning activities are to be jointly agreed upon by them and the student. The learning activities must meet the objectives of the practicum and be related to the competencies needed by health services researchers.

The students should also indicate how their performance will be evaluated. For example, they might prepare briefing notes on a health issue, lead a seminar on a health policy issue (the forum and audience for this seminar is negotiated with co-mentors) or prepare a report describing involvement in a specific policy development process for the selected health issue. The paper might examine an issue under consideration, the contextual environment (including historical perspectives) for the policy development process, factors influencing the policy development process, the type of evidence considered in the policy development process, the communication strategies used by various stakeholders to present research evidence to policy makers and implications of using a specific set of research findings in policy formulation. Such materials would be used to document their learning during the practicum.

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Policy Practicum Learning Plan

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Student Name

Mentor Name

To initiate the policy practicum: complete the first two columns of the Policy Practicum Learning Plan below by identifying which competencies in the first column need to be developed during the practicum and checking each (✓). In the second column, identify the activities you will undertake to meet each of the identified skills and competencies. Complete and sign the section below when you and the Policy Practicum Supervisor have agreed on the plan. When the first two columns are completed and the form is signed, take the form to the IHPME Graduate Office (HS425 – Attn: Dr. Whitney Berta) for your file. Ensure that you, the Policy Practicum supervisor, your HSPR Collaborative Program mentor, and your thesis supervisor have a copy.

When all policy practicum activities are completed: complete the third column of the Learning Plan below describing the activities undertaken and the time spent in each activity (fourth¹ column). Please append supporting documentation (e.g. briefing note, background paper, presentation of policy options, powerpoint slides of presentation of research findings relevant to policy development) that illustrate your activities.

Competency or specific skills	Proposed activities during policy practicum	Description of activities completed during practicum ¹	Time spent in each activity
1. Understanding of the Canadian health care system and how it has evolved over time; the implications of policy legacies, values and interests and institutional structures for further system modification and policy development; a critical appreciation of health services governance, organization, financing and delivery options and of the effect of geography on these options.			
2. Understanding of theories about how the health of populations is produced, maintained and enhanced at the individual, group, community, provincial and national level.			

¹ Append supporting documentation that illustrates activities.

Competency or specific skills	Proposed activities during policy practicum	Description of activities completed during practicum ¹	Time spent in each activity
3. Understanding of theories of health and health services knowledge production; the social, economic, political and ethical factors that influence knowledge production; and, the diverse assumptions embedded in knowledge production.			
4. Ability to effectively exchange knowledge and develop research partnerships with stakeholders in the health field (e.g., citizens, health care providers, decision-makers at all levels).			

Student Name	Student Signature	Date

Supervisor Name	Supervisor Signature	Date

Mentor Name	Mentor Signature	Date

Start Date of Policy Practicum	
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For our records, please complete the following:

Policy Practicum Supervisor's Information

Position	
Organization	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
Email	

* The policy practicum requirement must be met in order to complete the Collaborative Program requirements unless the student has requested and received an exemption based on prior learning experience.

Please return this form to the IHME Graduate Office, (HS 425, Attn: Dr. Whitney Berta), as soon as you and your Policy Practicum Supervisor have agreed on your objectives for the Policy Practicum.

REMEMBER TO KEEP A LOG OF YOUR ACTIVITIES AND THE TIME SPENT ON EACH

Policy Practicum Final Report

Both the student and the Policy Practicum Supervisor write and append a brief evaluative statement about how well the learning objectives were met.

Practicum Site	
Start Date	
End Date	

Final Evaluation:

Pass

Fail

Student Name	Student Signature	Date

Supervisor Name	Supervisor Signature	Date

Mentor Name	Mentor Signature	Date

Approved by:

HSPR Collaborative Program Director's Name	HSPR Collaborative Program Director's Signature	Date

Please return this form to the IHPME Graduate Office, (HS 425, Attn: Dr. Whitney Berta), when you have completed the Policy Practicum.

Please append any supporting materials.