

MPH CAPSTONE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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MILLER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES



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Glossary

Capstone Program: The term Capstone Program refers to a student's entire applied practice and integrative learning experience. The Capstone Program comprises two individual courses: EPH 680 – Field Experience and EPH 682 – Capstone Project, which are completed during separate semesters. Successful completion of the Capstone Program is required of all degree-seeking Master of Public Health (MPH) students in the Department of Public Health Sciences (DPHS).

Capstone Manager: The Capstone Manager is the Associate Director of Professional Development. This individual will interact with public health graduate students, Faculty Advisors, Community Partners, and administration on all aspects related to the Capstone Program. They are responsible for assigning a Faculty Advisor to each student, advertising Capstone Program opportunities to students, and overseeing the completion of the Capstone Program course requirements.

Academic Faculty Advisor: The student's assigned Academic Faculty Advisor is a faculty member within the DPHS who has been appointed and trained to oversee the student's MPH Program. Each MPH student is assigned a Faculty Advisor during their first semester of enrollment. The Faculty Advisor ensures that the student's Capstone Program requirements are met and guides the student by assisting in establishing realistic timelines. The Faculty Advisor reviews, provides feedback, and approves Capstone Program proposals, reports, and deliverables. They also interact with Community Partners and the Capstone Manager as necessary to ensure academic objectives are satisfied. Upon successfully completing each Capstone Program course, the Faculty Advisor is responsible for assigning the student a final grade.

Community Partner (Preceptor): The Community Partner is a public health professional who works in a community organization or is a UM faculty member involved in community projects. The Community Partner works at the site where the student is completing their Field Experience or Capstone Project. A Community Partner is required for both the Field Experience and the Capstone Project.

The Community Partner helps the student bridge the gap between training and practice, interacts with the Faculty Advisor and Capstone Manager as necessary, and ensures that the student's learning objectives, as well as the needs of the community organization, are met as part of the student's Capstone Program. The Community Partner is responsible for pre-approving a student's Field Experience and/or Capstone Project proposals and provides supervision of and mentorship for the student during their time working together. The Community Partner is additionally responsible for evaluating the student and their work at the completion of the Field Experience.

Community Site: The community site is a public health organization at the local, national, or international level where students complete their Field Experience and/or Capstone Project. Examples of community sites can be not-for-profit organizations, hospitals, state or local health departments, non-governmental organizations, for-profit firms, or University-affiliated clinics and settings.



What is the MPH Capstone Program?

The Capstone Program is a vital curriculum component for students seeking their Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from the University of Miami Department of Public Health Sciences (DPHS). As students move through the MPH academic curriculum, they are trained to use evidence-based practices to transform the health of their communities. The Capstone Program allows students to apply this knowledge in real-world settings locally, nationally, or internationally. Students are encouraged to build their Capstone Program in such a way that it supports their academic and professional interests while they advance in their careers as public health professionals.

Capstone Program Courses: The Capstone Program is required to complete the MPH degree and consists of two independent study courses: **EPH 680 Field Experience** (3 credits) and **EPH 682 Capstone Project** (2 credits). Successful completion of the Capstone Program will demonstrate attainment of specific MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies. These competencies are informed by the traditional public health core knowledge areas (Biostatistics; Epidemiology; Social & Behavioral Sciences; Health Policy & Management; and Environmental Health Sciences), as well as cross-cutting and emerging public health topic areas. This requirement is mandated by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), which is the Graduate Programs in Public Health national accrediting agency.

Neither of these courses requires in-person lectures or class meetings. EPH 680 and EPH 682 are independent study courses, and students are responsible for managing their own time and deliverables in coordination with their Faculty Advisor and Community Partner to ensure successful completion of each course. These courses cannot be completed in the same semester, and the EPH 680 Field Experience must be completed prior to the EPH 682 Capstone Project. The Faculty Advisor approves enrollment and assigns grades for these courses. The Faculty Advisor, Community Partner, and Capstone Manager are available resources for students to navigate their Capstone Program.

Enrollment: Students cannot self-enroll in these courses. Enrollment in either Capstone course is *restricted* and can only be done by a DPHS administrator with the Faculty Advisor's approval. Students must complete prerequisites for each course before their Faculty Advisor authorizes and requests student enrollment in the respective Capstone course. The enrollment process and prerequisites for each course are discussed in further detail later in this Handbook.

Blackboard: Once students are enrolled in either EPH 680 or EPH 682, they will have access to the course on Blackboard. Students must follow the deadlines established for each course/semester as outlined in Blackboard and are responsible for uploading documentation as required in the 'Assignments' tab.

Grades: Upon completion of course requirements, the student's Faculty Advisor will communicate with the Capstone Manager to assign the student's final grade – successful completion of each course will result in a Satisfactory (S) grade. Students who cannot complete either course in one semester will receive an Incomplete (I) grade and have one (1) year from the time the incomplete grade was received to fulfill course requirements successfully.



Documents and Forms: This *MPH Capstone Program Handbook* outlines the procedures, deliverables, and requirements to complete the MPH Capstone Program. Included in this Handbook are details of activities, required documentation, course timelines, and FAQs. Students are responsible for downloading editable forms from the [MPH Capstone Student Handbook and Documents](#) website to complete the required documentation for the Capstone Program.

The information that follows in this Handbook includes step-by-step instructions for MPH students to complete EPH 680 Field Experience and EPH 682 Capstone Project. For more information, please contact Katelyn McGuigan, the Associate Director of Professional Development, at kxm752@med.miami.edu.

Note for Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) Students

MSPH Students must complete a Master's Thesis. A separate handbook contains instructions for the completion of the Master's Thesis program. MSPH students must visit the [MS Thesis & Documents](#) website for further information.



EPH 680: Field Experience

The EPH 680 Field Experience course is the first required course in the MPH Capstone Program. The Field Experience is a pre-approved, supervised, applied practice experience (APE) that allows students the opportunity to apply their academic learning in a professional public health environment while observing and learning from professionals in the field. Through the Field Experience, students work in public health-related settings of their choosing to contribute to projects that complement their own public health interests and career goals. The Field Experience culminates in the student producing two (2) practice-based work products that contribute to the work being done at their chosen Community Site and demonstrate that students have attained selected public health competencies.

To enroll in EPH 680 Field Experience, all MPH students must have a pre-approved proposal that has been reviewed by both their Faculty Advisor and Community Partner. All students are required to complete 150 contact hours at their selected Community Site that are supervised by their Community Partner. No waivers are granted for academic or professional experiences completed before matriculating into the MPH program. If a student wishes to complete their Field Experience in their place of employment, they must develop objectives/responsibilities that are outside of the standard job description and complete their 150 required hours outside of their paid scope of work. When choosing to work for their employer, students are highly encouraged to have a separate Community Partner that is not their normal supervisor to oversee their Field Experience hours and deliverables.

Students may complete paid or unpaid internships for their work related to the Capstone Program. Alongside the Toppel Career Center, the DPHS supports the National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) position statement on unpaid internships which calls for "legislation to eliminate unpaid internships and provide support for employers in converting unpaid internships to paid internships" because they "are a barrier to achieving equity and opportunity for all college students." The DPHS encourages all employer partners to research the possibility of paid internships at their organizations and actively seeks out funded Field Experience opportunities to provide greater access to paid internships for all students.



EPH 680 AT-A-GLANCE

- **Prerequisite for enrollment:** Students must submit both a proposal and the accompanying competency agreement form that have been reviewed and signed by their Community Partner and their Faculty Advisor as a prerequisite of enrollment.
- **Scope:** Students select MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies that guide the student in designing their Field Experience objectives, activities, and work-products.
- **Implementation:** Students complete 150 contact hours at their chosen Community Site, supervised by their Community Partner and guided by the approved proposal, competencies, and work products.
- **Deliverables:** Students will produce two (2) practice-based work products that show they met their selected MPH competencies and that benefit their Community Partner & Site.
- **Course management:** EPH 680 is managed on Blackboard. Students are responsible for uploading all required documentation by the noted deadline. As an independent study course, students are responsible for managing their own time & coursework to ensure successful completion.
- **Grade:** Upon completing all deliverables, the student may receive a satisfactory grade (S), as assigned by their Faculty Advisor. Students who do not complete EPH 680 in the enrolled semester will receive an incomplete grade (I).

Prerequisites

There are several prerequisites students must meet before receiving permission to enroll in EPH 680. To enroll, your Faculty Advisor must send an email requesting enrollment to the Capstone Manager. The Capstone Manager will review the signed proposal documentation and, upon approval, grant permission to enroll to the Director of Enrollment Services, who will then enroll the student in CaneLink. Students cannot enroll in EPH 680 themselves.

It is strongly encouraged that students begin the preparation for their Field Experience in the semester before they plan to enroll and begin logging their 150 contact hours.

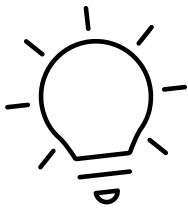
Before enrolling & logging hours, students must meet the following prerequisites:

1. Complete a minimum of nine (9) credits of graduate MPH coursework with the DPHS.
2. Complete four (4) required CITI courses, in addition to the online [Responsible Conduct of Research \(RCR\) course](#) administered by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research.
3. Complete the [Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form](#) and obtain signed approval from the Community Partner and the Faculty Advisor. On this form, students will identify two (2) practice-based work products to develop and select a minimum of five (5) MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies to meet while they are completing their Field Experience.



4. Complete the **Field Experience Proposal** and obtain approval from the Community Partner and the Faculty Advisor on proposed objectives, activities, and timeline.

Blackboard: Once students are enrolled in EPH 680 in Canelink, they will have access to the course in Blackboard. As soon as they have access, students will upload the following documents as Assignments: a) four (4) CITI completion reports; b) the signed Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form; and c) the approved Field Experience Proposal. Students are not allowed to begin logging hours until the above requirements have been satisfied.



CITI certification instructions, the Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form, the Field Experience Proposal template, and other required documentation, forms, and templates for EPH 680 Field Experience can be found on the [MPH Capstone Student Handbook and Documents](#) website and linked in the Appendix.

Students should work closely with both their Faculty Advisor and their Community Partner the semester before enrolling and completing EPH 680. This will ensure they have appropriately designed a Field Experience that will result in successfully meeting selected MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies and producing practice-based work products that exemplify the attainment of those competencies.

Selecting a Community Site and Community Partner

Students should begin thinking about what they would like to accomplish during their Field Experience as early as their first semester in their MPH degree program. Students want to be thinking about a Community Site and a Community Partner they would like to work with in the semester before desired enrollment in EPH 680. It is a good idea to meet with your Faculty Advisor during this time to discuss their specific expectations, desired timelines for review and approval of proposals, and guidance on an appropriate Field Experience.

Identifying Interests

Students may have a general understanding of what their public health interests are but may be unsure on how to narrow and focus their interests to determine an appropriate Field Experience that will benefit their long-term career goals. **Questions such as:** Am I interested in learning about healthcare administration and management?; Would I be interested in pursuing a career in government?; Am I interested in clinical research?; Would I enjoy engaging and working directly with community members?; Is it important to me to gain a specific skillset during my Field Experience, i.e. statistical analysis or program development?; Is there a specific population I am interested in working with to improve population health



outcomes?; and am I interested in community health or global health? – are just a few examples of questions that may help to get the process started and guide the student in the right direction.

Networking will play a major role at this point in the selection process. As soon as students start their MPH degree, they should begin networking and discussing public health interests with faculty members, fellow students, guest speakers, etc. The Graduate Programs in Public Health has established relationships with numerous local, national, and international organizations, but students should also explore and independently establish relationships with potential sites themselves.

During their first and second semester, students should attend as many **Capstone Information Sessions, Community Partner Meet and Greet and Community Partner Spotlight events, highlighted DPHS and Graduate Programs lecture series, Grand Rounds, and professional development events** as possible to get a broad understanding of the kind of work and research they would like to pursue.

Identifying a Community Partner

The Field Experience partnership should benefit both the student and the selected Community Site. The student's fieldwork will result in practice-based work products that demonstrate engagement in applied learning while in the field by developing tangible products that improve and/or enhance the Community Site's research, offered programs, or goals.

The following are a few ways students can identify their ideal Community Site and Community Partner:

- Stay up to date on emails being sent via the **Public Health Student listserv**. This listserv is used to announce available Capstone Program opportunities, internships, and involvement in research (can be clinical or non-clinical)
- Discuss their interests with their Faculty Advisor, teaching faculty, and the Capstone Manager
- Apply for a Graduate or Research Assistant position within the DPHS or UHealth System, as these positions can develop into an EPH 680 Field Experience and/or an EPH 682 Capstone Project
- Review the [Cane 2 Cane MPH Capstone Group](#) to view recent Capstone Program opportunities and review past examples of opportunities and Community Partners. Students must complete a profile on Cane 2 Cane and request access to this private group
- Explore the [MPH Capstone Program Interactive Map](#) and view past recordings of Community Partner events and Capstone Program Sessions stored on the [Blackboard One Stop Shop](#) (in the MPH Capstone folder, Event Recordings subfolder)
- Speak with current students who have already started their Capstone Program
- Conduct independent research on community organizations that may relate to your own public health interests

Once students have identified a Community Site and/or a Community Partner they would like to work with, they should connect with the primary contact to explore possible opportunities, goals, objectives, and activities that are mutually beneficial for the student and the organization.



Students should ensure that identified Community Partners are aware of their roles and responsibilities during the EPH 680 Field Experience, which include:

- Reviewing and approving the proposed Field Experience Proposal and scope of work
- Signing off on the Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form
- Supervising the student throughout their entire Field Experience
- Approving the student's Log of Hours after they have completed 150 contact hours
- Completing an evaluation of the student's work during their time completing the Field Experience.

Meeting with your Faculty Advisor

Once students have identified a Community Partner, they should set up another meeting with their Faculty Advisor to discuss the proposal development and to establish a timeline for completing the Field Experience requirements and documentation. Faculty Advisors can guide students to ensure they appropriately select their MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies, have determined objectives and activities relevant to the work they will be conducting with their Community Partner, and will be meeting their selected competencies during the development and completion of their chosen practice-based work products.

Both Faculty Advisors and Community Partners are responsible for signing off on a student's Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form and the Field Experience Proposal. Faculty Advisors are additionally responsible for reviewing and approving the student's Field Experience Final Report, for ensuring their practice-based work products demonstrate attainment of their selected competencies, and for assigning a final grade to the Capstone Manager upon completion of the course requirements.

Practice-Based Work Products & Competencies

Students have numerous opportunities to complete their Field Experience in a public health setting of their choice, working on projects that will benefit their future career goals. Below are some examples of past Field Experiences our MPH students have engaged in.

- Work with the Miami-Dade County Health Department to understand the agency's operations and to develop and administer surveys for qualitative analysis
- Work with the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program at Jackson Memorial Hospital to understand the programs offered to the community and to conduct focus groups to assess community needs
- Work with Project Medishare in Haiti to examine the community health worker system in the Central Plateau and to develop policies using evidence-based research

Students are required to produce two (2) practice-based work products by the completion of their Field Experience. These work products should benefit the Community Partner and demonstrate mastery of student-selected competencies. Documents required for academic purposes (e.g., contact hour logs,



reflection or summary papers prepared for faculty to address the experience, academic poster presentations) may **not** be counted towards the minimum of two (2) work products. Work products may include, but are not limited to, the below examples; further examples are included in the Field Experience Proposal template located in Appendix A.

- Data analysis results, spreadsheets, output & accompanying explanatory text
- Multi-media presentations (e.g., videos, podcasts, website content designed by student)
- Survey or data collection tool
- Key informant interviews
- Fact sheet, infographic, brochure, or poster (for Community Partner use)
- Training manuals or lessons plans
- Grant proposal
- Literature review (as requested by Community Partner)

Practice-based work products must demonstrate attainment of at least five (5) distinct MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies. A list of the competencies is found in the Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form located in Appendix A. Students should note that one work product may address more than one competency, if chosen carefully (i.e., one work product may address 2-3 competencies).

Required Documentation

The following documents and items are required to successfully complete EPH 680 Field Experience.

NOTE: All relevant instructions, forms, and templates for EPH 680 can be found in the Appendix, in addition to on the [MPH Capstone Student Handbook and Documents](#) website.

CITI Certifications: As public health practitioners, students are likely to participate in research at one time or another. Faculty, staff, and students involved in research at the University of Miami must complete a course in research ethics. Students at the University of Miami enrolled in EPH 680 must complete four (4) courses online via the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). The topics covered in these courses are a beneficial adjunct to student's current curriculum and provide them with a strong research foundation.

Students must complete these CITI courses **before** logging hours for EPH 680. Once enrolled in EPH 680 in Blackboard, they must upload their certificates of completion immediately.

Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form: This is an agreement set between the student and the selected Community Partner where the Community Partner agrees to serve as a supervisor to the student throughout their EPH 680 Field Experience.



In this form, students are required to identify their two (2) practice-based work products and to select at least five (5) MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies that they plan to attain during their Field Experience. At least three (3) of these competencies must be from the Foundational Competencies list. A minimum of five (5) competencies are required, and it is recommended that students do not exceed this amount unless they are certain their practice-based work products will meet the additional competencies.

Both the student's Faculty Advisor and Community Partner are required to review and sign this form. This form must be fully signed **before** logging hours for the Field Experience. Once enrolled in EPH 680 in Blackboard, students must upload their executed form immediately.

Field Experience Proposal: The Field Experience Proposal is a Word document the student will draft after an initial conversation with their Community Partner and meeting with their Faculty Advisor. The proposal serves as an overview of how the student will meet their selected MPH competencies, what objectives and activities are proposed, and what work products the student will produce that align with these competencies and objectives. Objectives should be written using SMART Objectives; please refer to the Field Experience Proposal Template for more information on SMART Objectives.

Students should expect to draft multiple proposal versions while their Faculty Advisor and Community Partner provide feedback. A final version of the proposal must be approved by both the Community Partner and Faculty Advisor **before** logging contact hours; the Faculty Advisor and Community Partner should not sign the Community Partner Agreement & Competency form until they have fully approved of the student's proposal as these two documents should be reviewed and approved simultaneously. Once enrolled in EPH 680 in Blackboard, students must upload their final proposal immediately.

Log of Hours: A minimum of 150 contact hours are required for the Field Experience at the selected Community Site, under the supervision of the chosen Community Partner. The Log of Hours must be approved/signed by the Community Partner at the end of the Field Experience. It is recommended that students share their log with their Community Partner multiple times throughout their Field Experience, as this makes it easier to maintain and receive approval upon completion.

Students will upload their signed Log of Hours into Blackboard once completed by their Community Partner.

Community Partner Evaluation: The Community Partner is required to complete an evaluation of the student during their Field Experience as part of the student's required documentation for EPH 680. Students are evaluated on their professional skills and demeanor.

Students will upload the completed, signed Community Partner Evaluation into Blackboard once received from their Community Partner.

Field Experience Final Report: The Field Experience Final Report is a Word document that details the student's experience working with their Community Partner. It will include a detailed description of objectives, completed activities, achievements, and limitations of the field experience, in addition to describing how each of the selected competencies was attained.



Like the Field Experience Proposal, students should expect to draft multiple versions of the final report while their Faculty Advisor provides feedback. The student's Faculty Advisor must sign off and approve the final report, which must be uploaded to Blackboard to receive final credit.

Practice-Based Work Products: Two (2) practice-based work products will be produced during the Field Experience to demonstrate attainment of the student's chosen competencies.

These work products are due with the Field Experience Final Report and must be uploaded to Blackboard once completed and approved by the Faculty Advisor and the Community Partner.

Evaluations (2): Students should complete two (2) online evaluations at the end of their Field Experience. The first evaluation is the student's evaluation of their Community Site and Community Partner; this evaluation allows Graduate Programs to collect detailed information on student's Community Partners and their Field Experience work. The second evaluation is anonymous and is the student's evaluation of their Faculty Advisor.

Both evaluations are found in Blackboard Assignments.

Photos (optional): Students are asked to submit photos that document their Field Experience, when applicable. Photos can document location, population, and type of public health work. Students should be mindful and respectful of participant's privacy and cultural norms. Graduate Programs may use these photographs to showcase the diversity and scope of students' work for marketing and recruiting purposes.



Process & Timeline

PRE - ENROLLMENT

- 1 Complete a **minimum of 9 credit hours** while searching for a Community Partner & Community Site
- 2 Discuss EPH 680 requirements & objectives with Faculty Advisor and Community Partner
- 3 Complete the Field Experience Proposal & the Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form
NOTE: multiple drafts may be required for final approval
- 4 Complete 4 CITI courses & the Responsible Conduct of Research training available via the OVPR*

ENROLLMENT

- 5 Register for EPH 680 & upload the CITI completion reports, the approved Field Experience Proposal & the Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form into Blackboard
- 6 Check in with Faculty Advisor & Community Partner to confirm logged hours & revise objectives/activities, competencies, and products, **as necessary**
- 7 Upload the signed Log of Hours, the signed Community Partner Evaluation, photos, & a minimum of 2 practice-based work products into Blackboard
- 8 Draft the Field Experience Final Report & begin revisions with Faculty Advisor
NOTE: multiple drafts will be required for final approval
- 9 Submit the Field Experience Final Report to Blackboard & complete the 'Field Experience Student Evaluation' & the anonymous 'Faculty Advisor Evaluation' in Assignments

**Students may begin logging hours after this step is complete, with Faculty Advisor and Capstone Manager approval. The Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) will contact students directly regarding registration for the [online Responsible Conduct of Research training](#) during the student's first semester of enrollment.*



EPH 682: The Capstone Project

The EPH 682 Capstone Project course is the second required course in the MPH Capstone Program that is completed after the EPH 680 Field Experience. The Capstone Project is a pre-approved, integrated learning experience (ILE) that provides students with an opportunity to apply public health field work, academic theory, and acquired skills to community health problems in collaboration with a Community Partner.

Capstone Projects may be:

- Continued collaborations with the *same* Community Partner as the EPH 680 Field Experience addressing public health needs identified at the site; or
- Collaborations with a *different* Community Partner but with a *similar* population and/or public health topic from the EPH 680 Field Experience; or
- Collaborations with a *different* Community Partner and with a *different* population and/or public health topic from the EPH 680 Field Experience.

As part of EPH 682, students will select a minimum of three (3) MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies that they will address while conducting a public health project that scientifically evaluates solutions to their chosen public health problem. Students will use a variety of qualitative and/or quantitative methodology to analyze data (if relevant), draw conclusions, and make recommendations. The project will culminate in a final, 10-15-page written report that details aim, methodology, analyses, conclusions, and recommendations.

To enroll in EPH 682 Capstone Project, all MPH students must have a pre-approved proposal that has been reviewed by both their Faculty Advisor and their Community Partner. It is expected that students will spend approximately 150 hours completing their Capstone Project. No waivers are granted for academic or professional experiences completed prior to matriculating into the MPH program and enrolling in EPH 682. If a student wishes to complete their Capstone Project in their place of employment, they must develop objectives/responsibilities that are outside of the standard job description and complete their project hours outside of their paid scope of work. When choosing to work for their employer, students are highly encouraged to have a separate Community Partner that is not their normal supervisor to oversee their Capstone Project.



EPH 682 AT-A-GLANCE

- **Prerequisite for enrollment:** Students must submit both a proposal and the accompanying competency agreement form that have been reviewed and signed by their Community Partner and their Faculty Advisor as a prerequisite of enrollment.
- **Scope:** Students select MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies which guide the student in designing their Capstone Project methodology.
- **Implementation:** Students complete approximately 150 hours working on their Capstone Project, guided by the competencies chosen and the approved Capstone Project Proposal.
- **Deliverables:** Students will produce a Capstone Project Final Report that shows they met their chosen competencies.
- **Course management:** EPH 682 is managed on Blackboard. Students are responsible for uploading all required documentation by the noted deadline. As an independent study course, students are responsible for managing their own time and coursework to ensure successful completion.
- **Grade:** Upon completion of all required deliverables, the student may receive a satisfactory grade (S), as assigned by their Faculty Advisor. Students who do not complete EPH 682 in the enrolled semester will receive an incomplete grade (I).

Prerequisites

There are several prerequisites students must complete before receiving permission to enroll in EPH 682. To enroll, your Faculty Advisor must send an email requesting enrollment to the Capstone Manager. The Capstone Manager will review the signed proposal documentation and, upon approval, grant permission to enroll to the Director of Enrollment Services who will then enroll the student in CaneLink. Students cannot enroll in EPH 682 themselves.

It is strongly encouraged that students begin the preparation for their Capstone Project in the semester before they plan to enroll to complete their project.

Prior to enrolling, students must meet the following prerequisites:

1. Complete the EPH 680 Field Experience course.
2. Complete the **Capstone Project Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form** and obtain signed approval from the Community Partner and the Faculty Advisor. On this form, students will select a minimum of three (3) MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies to meet while completing their project. At least one (1) competency must come from the concentration-specific list.
3. Complete the **Capstone Project Proposal** and obtain approval from the Community Partner and the Faculty Advisor on the proposed objectives, activities, and timeline.



Blackboard: Once students are enrolled in EPH 682 Capstone Project in Canelink, they will have access to the course in Blackboard. As soon as they have access, students will upload the following documents as Assignments: a) the fully executed Capstone Project Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form; and b) the approved Capstone Project Proposal. Students are not allowed to begin working on their project until the above requirements have been satisfied.

The Capstone Project Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form, the Capstone Project Proposal template, and other required documentation, forms, and templates for EPH 682 Capstone Project can be found on the [Capstone Student Handbooks and Documents](#) website and linked in the Appendix.

Students should work closely with both their Faculty Advisor and their Community Partner the semester prior to completing their Capstone Project. This will help to ensure they have appropriately designed a Capstone Project that will result in the student successfully meeting their selected MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies.



Students should begin thinking about whether their proposed Capstone Project will require *Institutional Review Board* (IRB) approval early in the development of their proposal. If students are unsure, they should consult with their Faculty Advisor for guidance. If IRB approval is needed, the study should be submitted to the IRB at least 2 months prior to beginning the project. Once IRB approval is granted, submit an electronic copy of the approval letter to the Capstone Manager via email.

Capstone Project Categories

Students may identify potential Capstone Project ideas during their Field Experience and/or in their academic coursework. As mentioned above, students must work in collaboration with a Community Partner and this partner may be the same one they worked with on their Field Experience, or students may choose to seek out a new partner altogether. Like EPH 680, students may discuss their Capstone Project ideas with their Faculty Advisor or their Community Partner for guidance.

Students must select a minimum of three (3) MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies to be fulfilled through their Capstone Project. **Note that at least one (1) of these competencies must be from the generalist concentration-specific competency list provided.** A list of the foundational and concentration-specific competencies is found in the Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form located in Appendix B.

There are several project categories students may choose from when thinking of what they would like to accomplish during their Capstone Project course. This will vary depending on a student's public health interests and long-term career goals. Below is a summary of Capstone Project categories:



- **Program Development:** Design a health promotion program or intervention using evidence-based practice that could be implemented at the Community Site, including instructions, procedures, manuals, and materials.
- **Program Implementation:** Participate in a substantive way toward implementing a program or intervention already planned at the Community Site.
- **Program Evaluation:** Conduct a formal evaluation of an existing program or intervention at the Community Site to evaluate effectiveness and outcomes.
- **Research:** Research the origin of a health problem identified by the Community Site; conduct a systematic investigation including research development, data collection and analysis, testing, and evaluation.
- **Health Policy/Advocacy:** Develop a health policy position paper related to the mission of the Community Site and advocate for its approval.
- **Other:** Capstone Projects could involve data analysis and reporting; survey research; health education; community assessments; and other project types. Consult with your Faculty Advisor to develop a project that aligns with your professional goals.

Required Documentation

The following documents and deliverables are required to successfully complete EPH 682 Capstone Project.

NOTE: All relevant instructions, forms, and templates for EPH 682 can be found in the Appendix, in addition to on the [MPH Capstone Student Handbook and Documents](#) website.

Capstone Project Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form: This is an agreement set between the student and the selected Community Partner. The Community Partner agrees to serve as an advisor to the student throughout their EPH 682 Capstone Project.

In this form, students are required to select at least three (3) MPH foundational and concentration-specific competencies that they plan to attain during their Capstone Project; at least one (1) of the competencies must be from the generalist concentration-specific competency list. A minimum of three (3) competencies are required, and it is recommended that students do not exceed this amount unless they are certain their project will meet additional competencies.

Both the student's Faculty Advisor and the Community Partner are required to review and sign this form. This form must be fully executed **before** starting the work required for the Capstone Project. Once enrolled in EPH 682 in Blackboard, students must upload their signed form immediately.

Capstone Project Proposal: The Capstone Project Proposal is a Word document the student will draft after an initial conversation with their Community Partner and meeting with their Faculty Advisor. The proposal serves as an overview of the student's work for their Capstone Project.



Students should expect to draft multiple versions of their proposal while their Faculty Advisor and their Community Partner provide feedback. A final proposal version must be approved by both the Community Partner and the Faculty Advisor **before** starting the project. Once enrolled in EPH 682 in Blackboard, students must upload their final, approved proposal immediately.

Capstone Project Final Report: The Capstone Project Final Report is a 10-15 page Word document that details the methodology and project the student completed during their Capstone Project.

Like the Capstone Project Proposal, students should expect to draft multiple versions of the final report while their Faculty Advisor provides feedback. The student's Faculty Advisor must sign off and approve of the Final Report, which must be uploaded in Blackboard to receive final credit.

Capstone Project Final Report Rubric: Faculty Advisors are required to complete the Final Report Rubric to approve the student's final Capstone Project and state that it meets all expectations. This form is completed by the Faculty Advisor directly in Blackboard and submitted along with the final EPH 682 grade.

Evaluations (2): Students should complete two (2) online evaluations at the end of their Capstone Project. The first evaluation is the student's evaluation of their Community Site and Community Partner; this evaluation allows Graduate Programs to collect detailed information on the student's Community Partners and their Capstone Project experience. The second evaluation is anonymous and is the student's evaluation of their Faculty Advisor.

Both evaluations are found in Blackboard Assignments.



Process & Timeline

PRE – ENROLLMENT

- 1 Discuss EPH 682 requirements & objectives with Faculty Advisor and Community Partner
- 2 Complete the Capstone Project Proposal & Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form
NOTE: multiple drafts may be required for final approval
- 3 Begin project after final approvals are received*

ENROLLMENT

- 4 Register for EPH 682 & upload approved Capstone Project Proposal & Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form into Blackboard
- 5 Check in with Faculty Advisor & Community Partner on progress & to revise project scope, objectives & competencies, **as necessary**
- 6 Draft the Capstone Project Final Report & begin revisions with Faculty Advisor
NOTE: multiple drafts will be required for final approval
- 7 Submit Capstone Project Final Report in Blackboard & complete the 'Capstone Project Abstract Submission' & anonymous 'Faculty Advisor Evaluation' in Assignments

**Student may begin project at this stage, with Faculty Advisor and Capstone Manager approval*



Capstone Program Considerations – Joint, Accelerated, and 4 + 1 Programs

The DPHS offers various ways of earning an MPH degree including joint degree programs, accelerated MPH, and 4 + 1 programs. The degree requirements and/or timelines for these special MPH programs vary from the traditional 2-year MPH degree program. Students in these special programs are responsible for understanding their specific degree program plan and knowing their respective academic requirements as outlined in the Academic Bulletin.

MPH Joint Degree Programs – See [list in the Academic Bulletin](#):

- BSHS and MPH (4+1)
- BSPH and MPH (4+1)
- MPH/JD – MPH and Juris Doctorate (joint degree)
- MPH/MPA – MPH and Master of Public Administration (joint degree)
- MPH/MAIA – MPH and Master of Arts in International Administration (joint degree)
- MPH/LAS – MPH and Master of Arts in Latin American Studies (joint degree)
- MD/MPH – MPH and Medical Doctorate (joint degree)

Students in these programs should meet directly with the Capstone Manager to ensure they understand and are compliant with their respective degree Capstone Program requirements.



International Field Experiences and Capstone Projects

Students may complete their EPH 680 Field Experience and/or EPH 682 Capstone Project in a foreign country. The Graduate Programs in Public Health offer some funding support to assist students in accomplishing this; these opportunities are referenced in the next section.

Students traveling to a foreign country for purposes related to their employment or academic fulfillment with the University must comply with the [University of Miami Travel Policy](#) and the [University of Miami International Travel Approval Policy](#).

Student Travel Abroad Policy

All students traveling abroad for academic purposes must adhere to the following steps before departing the United States. It is advised that students start this process as soon as they know they are traveling abroad and **at least 2 months before** travel to allow ample time to complete the below steps.

1. Students must check their destination country or regions within countries on the [U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Warning page](#). For graduate students within the DPHS, travel to the countries or regions within countries that are listed on the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories as **Level 3** or **Level 4** requires departmental approval and approval from both the Study Abroad and Risk Management Offices. Please see section *Level 3 & Level 4 Travel Advisories* below for further information. Students traveling to countries or regions within countries listed as a Level 2 travel risk or lower may proceed to the next step without receiving these additional approvals.
2. Once travel approvals are received for students traveling to countries or regions within countries listed as Level 3 or Level 4 travel risk, students must proceed with booking air travel through the [University of Miami Travel Portal](#) or through a World Travel Agent.
3. Register any airfare, hotel, or car rental itinerary not booked through the University of Miami Travel Portal with the [University of Miami's International SOS Global Assistance Program](#) (itineraries made through the Travel Portal are automatically shared with the International SOS), print a copy of the [UM Travel Assistance Card](#), and download the International SOS Mobile App. This card contains the membership number, emergency contacts, and additional information.

All students traveling abroad **must** register with the International SOS if they do not book their travel via the Travel Portal. Students must input their entire itinerary, including all locations traveled; should the itinerary change at any time before and/or during the trip, the changes must be updated on the International SOS website.



The University of Miami Global Assistance Program provides its international travelers with medical, security, and travel assistance, managed and administered by International SOS, which is a crisis management assistance company. Completing this step will register the student's trip with the University of Miami Study Abroad Office, a requirement before traveling. This should be done at least 2 months before planned travel.

4. Students must refer to the University's [Export Control Compliance Website](#) prior to their travel for additional travel information.
5. Refer to the University's [Travel & Business Expense Reimbursement Policy](#) for information on expense reports, per diem rates, and more.
6. At this time, students must additionally email the Capstone Manager at DPHSawards@med.miami.edu to inform them they are traveling abroad. The following information needs to be included:
 - a. Name
 - b. Capstone or Thesis course the student is traveling for (EPH 680, 682, 810)
 - c. City and Country of trip
 - d. Exact dates of trip
 - e. Confirmation of trip registration from the Travel Portal and/or International SOS
7. Students need to confirm if their health insurance policy has coverage in a foreign region and if evacuation insurance is included. If your current health insurance does not cover emergency evacuation and repatriation, you may purchase this coverage from [UM's Student Health Center](#), for a small fee, if you have alternative medical coverage. Students with the UM medical insurance have this coverage embedded in the policy.
8. Students who require travel medicine consultation and/or immunization should schedule an appointment at the [Student Health Services Office](#) or with their own medical provider at least six weeks prior to travel. **Note:** There are costs associated with this visit. Students should contact the student health office and/or their medical provider for specifics on copays, coverage, etc.

For FAQs, additional international travel information resources, health advisory information, and safety information, please refer to the University of Miami's [International Travel Management](#) website.

IMPORTANT: Any student who does not register their travel booked outside the Travel Portal with the International SOS Program before travel will not be authorized to travel. Failure to comply with these guidelines may lead to the non-recognition of credits by the University of Miami for courses taken abroad. See the [Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook](#).



Level 3 and Level 4 Travel Advisories

If traveling to a destination that is **Level 3 Orange (Reconsider Travel)** or **Level 4 Red (Do Not Travel)**, students must continue with the following steps:

1. Students must complete the appropriate [Travel Authorization Form](#) which is found in the Risk Management website. Graduate students in the DPHS will complete the [International Travel STUDENT Authorization Form \(Restricted Travel Only\)](#).
2. Before submitting the Authorization Form for signature, students must schedule a meeting with the Capstone Manager for review and approval. Once travel plans are approved, students may continue to submit the form for departmental approval.
3. This form is first submitted to the traveler's departmental Chair, Dean, Vice President, or designee for initial travel authorization. The Capstone Manager will communicate the best individual to submit the form to for signature during the review meeting with the student.
4. Once this signature is obtained, travel authorization forms are submitted to the Office of Study Abroad by email at studyabroad@miami.edu.
5. The Office of Study Abroad, in consultation with Risk Management, will review the request and provide the recommendation for travel (approval, approval with conditions, or rejection).
6. Once approval is received, students may proceed with step #2 above.



Funding Opportunities

The Graduate Programs in Public Health offers funding opportunities for MPH and MSPH graduate students to support their Capstone Program, Thesis Program, and other professional development opportunities. Graduate students in other MS and PhD degree programs are eligible for conference awards from their corresponding programs and should discuss available funding opportunities with their Program Director. The following programs are available to eligible MPH students:

- **MPH & MSPH Public Health Capstone & Thesis Project Award:** This funding opportunity provides support for national or international travel for graduate students who wish to conduct their Field Experience outside of the city of Miami, or for funds needed for the MPH Capstone Project or MSPH Thesis Project. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis.
- **MPH & MSPH Public Health Conference Award:** This funding opportunity provides support for graduate students to attend a public health conference of their choice. Students must have an abstract accepted to the conference to be eligible for this award. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis.
- **Kuvin Foundation – M.I.S.H. Fellowship:** The Miami Israel Science and Health (MISH) Fellowship is an established partnership between the University of Miami and the Kuvin Foundation. The MISH Fellowship is granted by the Kuvin Foundation, specifically to the University of Miami’s graduate students in the DPHS. It is designed to support travel and work in a foreign country dedicated to the Foundation’s mission – building peace in the Middle East region through science. The Fellowship is intended for individuals who are interested in international scientific collaboration in the Middle East region.

Further information regarding these funding mechanisms, eligibility requirements, and links to each application can be found on the [Graduate Programs Funding Opportunities website](#).



Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to work with the same Community Partner for both the EPH 680 Field Experience and the EPH 682 Capstone Project?

No. It is not required that students work with the same Community Partner for both courses, though often students choose to continue with the same partner as it can provide continuity and the opportunity to delve further into a project of interest that may have been identified during the Field Experience.

Can I complete my Capstone Program at my current place of employment?

Yes, students can complete their Capstone Program at their place of employment. However, students must ensure that they develop objectives & responsibilities that are outside of the standard job description and complete their required coursework outside of their paid responsibilities. Students should detail how they will accomplish their Capstone Program objectives and goals outside of their typical work schedule in either their EPH 680 or their EPH 682 proposal and ensure both their Faculty Advisor and their Community Partner are aware of and approve of this plan.

Why am I receiving an error message when I try to enroll in EPH 680 or EPH 682 in Canelink?

Students cannot enroll in EPH 680 and EPH 682 themselves; if they try to enroll on their own, they will receive an error message in Canelink. Student's Faculty Advisors are responsible for providing approval to the Capstone Manager and the Director of Enrollment Services, who will then enroll students in their requested course. Each course has specific prerequisites that students must meet before approval and enrollment. Please visit the EPH 680 and the EPH 682 sections above to determine enrollment requirements for each course.

What happens if I do not complete my Field Experience or Capstone Project by the semester deadline?

If students are unable to complete either EPH 680 or EPH 682 by the semester deadline, they will receive an 'Incomplete' (I) grade for the semester. Receiving an 'I' grade does not affect a student's GPA, nor does it show up on transcripts once the course has been successfully completed. When an 'I' grade is received, students have one-year from the time the grade was received to complete the course successfully; if the course is not completed in that one-year time frame, they will be required to re-enroll in the respective course and pay full credits again to complete the course.

Once a student has received an 'I' grade for a semester, they will continue to complete the course work as normal, utilizing the same Blackboard course in which they originally enrolled for their document submissions. Once the Community Partner and Faculty Advisor confirm that the student has completed their work and that they approve of their final products, the Faculty Advisor is then responsible for requesting a grade change from the Capstone Manager. The Capstone Manager assigns the student a 'Satisfactory' grade, which is reflected within the student's Canelink account within a few weeks of being processed.



Can I complete EPH 680 and EPH 682 in the same semester?

No. Students should plan to complete EPH 680 and EPH 682 in two different semesters. The EPH 680 Field Experience course must be completed first prior to enrolling in the EPH 682 Capstone Project course.

When should I start planning for EPH 680 and/or EPH 682?

Students should begin to plan for both EPH 680 and EPH 682 the semester prior to their desired enrollment term. As both courses require proposals and signed documentation to enroll, there is significant prep work that must be completed prior to obtaining approval to enroll in either course. It can take students time to identify a Community Partner and project they would like to work on, so it is recommended students start planning for these courses a few months before their anticipated start date/term. Students do not enroll in either course and then begin their planning and preparation for their required coursework.

Students who complete the 45-credit MPH Program in 2 years typically wait two full semesters prior to beginning their Field Experience, though students may plan to enroll in EPH 680 during their second semester in the program if they wish, assuming they have completed a minimum of 9 credits of graduate-level coursework at that point. Students in the Accelerated MPH and/or 4 + 1 programs may consider meeting with the Capstone Manager early on in their program to determine a timeline that works well with their specific degree program plan.

What is the difference between a Field Experience and a Capstone Project?

The EPH 680 Field Experience course is designed to provide students with real world work experience in the field of public health and places students in a health-related setting of their choice to work on supervised projects of mutual interest to both the Community Partner and the student. At the end of the Field Experience, students will have developed two (2) practice-based work products that could be a survey tool, a literature review, a dataset analysis, an infographic, or numerous other products that will benefit the Community Partner and ultimately be used by the Community Site in real time.

The EPH 682 Capstone Project course builds upon what students learned in their EPH 680 field work and provides students with the opportunity to apply their learned public health academic theory and acquired skills gained in field, professional, and academic work to an identified public health problem. The course concludes with a final written report that details the process and methods the student undertook to address their chosen public health topic.

It is important to note that if students complete EPH 680 and EPH 682 with the same Community Partner, the two courses must culminate in distinct projects that are independent from one another and can be identified as such. For example, as part of the Field Experience, a Community Partner might request that the student develop and distribute a survey to the target population the Community Site serves, and then analyze the resulting survey data; the survey tool and data analysis could be used to satisfy the EPH 680 practice-based work products requirement. As a Capstone Project, the student could utilize the survey data to develop and implement an evaluation plan or a training program that targets the needs of the specific population served by their Community Partner.



What is the difference between a Capstone Project and a Thesis Project?

The EPH 682 Capstone Project is a graduation requirement for MPH students, while the EPH 810 Thesis Project is a requirement for students in a Master of Science (MS) degree program that requires the completion of a thesis.

The Thesis Project requires an individual investigation of a current public health problem and allows MS students to demonstrate competencies in the development and implementation of a research question. Students work closely with their Faculty Advisor and Thesis Committee during their investigation. The Thesis Project follows the formatting, guidelines, and deadlines of the [Graduate School's Electronic Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#) requirements and includes a formal oral defense of the student's work.

Following the example given in the above question, MPH students completing their Capstone Project may utilize survey data to develop and implement an evaluation plan while MS students completing their Thesis Project would utilize the survey data to answer an identified research question and hypothesis.

Where do I submit my Capstone Program paperwork?

The Capstone Program is managed via Blackboard, as all other graduate-level courses administered in the DPHS. Once a student is enrolled in EPH 680 or EPH 682 in Canelink, they are given access to the respective course in Blackboard at the start of each semester. Students are responsible for uploading all required documentation in the 'Assignments' tab in a timely manner and adhering to each semester's deadlines. They are additionally responsible for corresponding with their Faculty Advisor to inform them when an Assignment has been uploaded and is ready for grading.

As students are required to have approved paperwork prior to enrolling in EPH 680 and EPH 682, they are responsible for holding on to their completed paperwork until they are given access to the respective course in Blackboard. Once they have access, students should upload their approved documents as soon as possible and as documents are finalized throughout the semester.

What happens if I need to revise my chosen competencies/work products in the middle of my EPH 680 Field Experience?

It is not uncommon for things to unfold differently as originally planned, so it is possible that a students' Field Experience objectives, activities, and work products may change after they start working with their Community Partner. If this occurs, students are responsible for ensuring alignment among the activities and work products and confirming their newly chosen work products still meet their chosen MPH competencies; if they do not, they may reselect competencies that are more appropriate. Students are then responsible for revising their Proposal and Community Partner Agreement and Competency Form to reflect the changes and gaining approval from their Faculty Advisor once again. The approved, revised documents may then be re-uploaded to Blackboard to ensure continuity with the Final Report.

Where can I find deadlines for the Capstone Program?

General deadlines for the Capstone Program can be found on both the [Capstone Student Handbooks and Documents](#) website and in the Appendix. Specific semester deadlines will be detailed in Blackboard for each respective course once students are enrolled.



Appendices

In addition to the appendices below, students may refer to the [MPH Capstone Student Handbook and Documents](#) website for all instructions, templates, and forms that are required for the EPH 680 Field Experience and EPH 682 Capstone Project. These resources are meant to guide the student, Community Partner, and Faculty Advisor through completion of the Capstone Program. Relevant forms will also be available in the respective Blackboard course once students are enrolled via Canelink.

Appendix A: EPH 680 Field Experience Required Documents

1. [CITI Certification on Protection of Human Research Subjects – Instructions](#)
2. [Field Experience Proposal Template](#)
3. [Field Experience Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form](#)
4. [Field Experience Log of Hours](#)
5. [Field Experience Evaluation from Community Partner](#)
6. [Field Experience Student Evaluation](#)
7. [Field Experience Final Report Template](#)

Appendix B: EPH 682 Capstone Project Required Documents

1. [Capstone Project Proposal Template](#)
2. [Capstone Project Community Partner Agreement & Competency Form](#)
3. [Capstone Project Final Report Template](#)
4. [Capstone Project Final Report Grading Rubric](#)
5. [Capstone Project Abstract Submission and Evaluation](#)

Appendix C: Capstone Deadlines

1. [MPH Capstone Program Deadlines](#)