

The Experiential Component (EC) & EC Advising Public Health Concentration

The Experiential Component Summary

Because many public health challenges cannot be fully appreciated until one has hands-on experience working on public health issues with populations or communities, each concentrator must have at least one relevant field-based educational experience. This requirement is known as the Experiential Component (EC). It may be met through participation in an approved study abroad program, an approved field-work Winter Study course, a WS99 project, or a not-for-credit summer or academic-year internship. Students may also gain experiential credit in external Public Health study abroad programs such as the SIT-IHP program. In every case, the EC Advisor must approve the project in advance. Ideally, this EC is one cornerstone of the Public Health concentrator's thematic track described in their application, but in some cases the EC may be less directly related to the in-class coursework.

Objectives of the EC

- Experience field work, in a non-academic setting, that engages with a particular public health issue and population
- Foster an opportunity to apply, reflect and draw on concepts, frameworks and skills learned from public health classes, allowing students to connect the classroom experience to interactions and dynamics in the 'real world'
- Meaningfully process, synthesize and evaluate scientific knowledge that is communicated through a variety of media
- Gain practical and professional experience in public health related work either in a local domestic community or internationally

The following *cannot* count for EC credit

- Internships that were conducted without EC pre-approval from the PH Advisory Board, except in unusual circumstances
- Shadowing a doctor
- Williams two week spring breakout trip
- Experiences that are less than one month and do not result in an in-depth understanding of a public health issue or population

Note: An EC experience proposed and described in your application to the Public Health concentration does not mean it was approved. You *must* receive official approval from the EC Advisor.

Experiential Component Requirements and Advising

For Academic Years 2021-22 and 2022-23 only

The EC Advisor for all Public Health Concentrators is Marion Min-Barron. There are three main objectives of the Experiential Component (EC) Advising:

- Provide guidance on critical reflection of the student's EC experience;
- Begin 'portfolio building' in which students intellectually and emotionally tie together their coursework, their EC and potential career and graduate educational goals;
- Provide training and guidance on professionalism, ethics & safety when working in the field

In order to receive credit for their EC, every student must follow the steps described below:

1. Fill out the [EC google form](#). Students should expect an email indicating approval or denial within one week of form submission. If you have not heard back within this time or need approval earlier, please email Prof. Marion Min-Barron (MMB).
2. Receive approval from MMB regarding the proposed EC, via email.
3. Have two points of 1:1 contact with MMB during their EC (described below).
4. Write a weekly journal entry during their EC. Weekly writing prompts will be provided but students will be encouraged to also write freely. This weekly journal will be via a google doc, to be shared with MMB as a way to carry an asynchronous conversation.
5. Enroll and complete the Winter Study course: "Concluding your Experiential Component: Public Health Reflections" (described below)¹.

The two 1:1 points of contact during the EC includes a first meeting which covers expectations, professionalism, goals & initial reflection. The second serves as a general check-in and mid-point reflection. Ideally these meetings take place in-person but Zoom is an option.

Additionally, for Winter Study terms 2022 and 2023, MMB will offer a WSP course, "Concluding your Experiential Component: Public Health Reflections" which will serve as a third and final point of contact to complete the EC requirement. Anyone who has completed their EC is strongly encouraged to enroll in this course as it functions as a concluding component of the EC². You may be off campus and still enroll in this WSP. The workload for this course is 'light' and students are strongly encouraged to enroll in a second WSP course. If students do not enroll in a second WSP, they should explain their reasoning to MMB via email.

The structure of "Concluding your Experiential Component: Public Health Reflections" will be two 'in-person' class meetings during the winter semester and asynchronous small group online discussions via Marco Polo (a video chat app). If a student is off campus and cannot attend the two in person meetings, they can be excused from the in-person meetings and will be asked to write a reflection paper instead. Within their small groups, students will listen to their peers' reflections and also share their own experiences, struggles and questions. Lastly, students will also be asked to provide 1-2 written reflection papers.

¹ Any student who fulfills their EC requirement with a WSP led by a Public Health faculty member may be exempt from requirements 2-5 listed above, but must still fill out the [EC google form](#).

² If a concentrator cannot enroll in this WSP, they will be asked to write a paper at the beginning of their Senior Spring semester but must indicate this plan to MMB ASAP.