

Global Field Experience Financial Awards

Public Health Reflection and Field Experience Planning Worksheet

During your course of study at the Rollins School of Public Health, you will have several opportunities to enhance your life- and career preparation through applied practical experience. Experiential learning provides important opportunities for building practical skills; these opportunities are also among the few times in a course of study and/or career when you have the full power to choose what you will do.

This document is designed to assist you in pre-planning as you begin applying to different experiences at Rollins, including the Global Field Experience (GFE) Award. You may engage in this exercise multiple times in order to expand your ideas or weigh differing interests and priorities. Ultimately this form is for your use in reflecting on how you want to chart your own experiential learning path.

Other opportunities for experiential learning include your practicum experience, fieldwork, participation in student organizations, volunteering and your thesis or capstone.

*This form has been adapted from Dabney Evans, PhD who was the original creator of this guide.

The Big Picture

Take a few moments to reflect on why you are pursuing public health studies in the first place.

What are you passionate about?

How does public health fit in your life story? How will your time at RSPH fit, or divert from, your previous studies, work experience, volunteering and life experience?

Where do you see yourself in three years (job setting/location; type of work; hobbies, interests)?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

Planning your field experience

Step 1. Define your learning objectives.

Learning objectives – just like the ones you see in course syllabi – are a statement of expectations. They begin with a (skills based) action verb. Bloom’s Taxonomy is a great resource for identifying action verbs (<http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/documents/assessments/Blooms%20Level.pdf>).

Learning objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, and Time related). In the case of a specific experiential learning project you can assume that you will be responsible for all objectives and that they should be completed by the end of the experiential learning period. You may not need to include an assignable and a time specific portion within each objective. You may choose to specify a specific geography, work setting, disease, population or activity. As you develop your learning objectives, remember to be realistic about what you can accomplish within the time you will spend on each project.

Example: By the end of my GFE, I will be able to: prepare a monitoring and evaluation plan for pregnant adolescents involved in the Healthy Mothers Program in Nigeria.

Action - Define 3-5 learning objectives for your experiential learning

Type of experience, select one (REAL job, GFE, practicum, thesis, etc.):

By the end of this experience I will be able to:

<u>Learning Objective 1</u>	
<u>Learning Objective 2</u>	
<u>Learning Objective 3</u>	
<u>Learning Objective 4</u>	

<u>Learning Objective 5</u>	
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Step 2. Describe your “dream” experiential learning project

Based on the above learning objectives you now know what you want to achieve at the end of your project. How do you get there? And what will you actually do? In the next section think through the different aspects of your project. Feel free to be as ambitious and idealistic as you want at this point.

Action - Describe in as much detail as possible the following:

- Who you will be working with (population and agency type e.g. international NGO, CBO);
- What kinds of activities you will be doing (e.g. primary data collection, evaluation, education);
- Where you will be working (geography and setting e.g. rural community, organization HQ); and
- Why (what is the end of goal of the overall project/may be the same as your overall career mission).

<u>Who?</u>	
<u>What?</u>	
<u>Where?</u>	
<u>Why?</u>	

<u>Additional details</u>	
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Step 3. Identify priorities and non-negotiables

Examining the description developed in Step 2, try to prioritize your priorities. This is the time to be realistic.

For example, if you said it your dream was to work on a WASH project among an indigenous population in Honduras, what would be most important? If you had the choice between a research project in Honduras (priority: geography) and a WASH project in Nepal (priority: subject matter), which would you prioritize? Perhaps working with an indigenous population is the most important thing to you (non-negotiable: population).

If you know you only want to work in the U.S. or other high-income locales, then what work setting would you prioritize? Examples include CDC or state or local government; consulting; direct service; community-based organization or NGO; education or higher ed, etc.

Action - List below your priorities and non-negotiables

Priority:

<u>Priority 1</u>	
<u>Priority 2</u>	
<u>Priority 3</u>	

Non-negotiables:

<u>Non-negotiable 1</u>	
<u>Non-negotiable 2</u>	

Step 4. Compare your “dream” to reality & Negotiate

Now you have a clearer idea of what you’d like to do and what is important to you. However, you may not always get everything you want. When you are “shopping” for a GFE or other applied experience, compare what you have written above to the real opportunities available to you. How do your dream and your priorities compare to reality? What can you negotiate to make reality look more like your dream? What can you sacrifice on in order to bring your dream to reality?

Action – Discuss your dream with an ADAP, faculty advisor, mentor or the contact person for the experiential learning opportunities you have identified interest in. Determine how much they can/ will accommodate your interests.

Date/time of discussion, notes from discussion and next steps:

Step 5. Make your “dream” into reality

You now have the information in hand to decide if you want to move forward with an experiential learning opportunity. Hopefully you have found an existing opportunity that meets both your goals and the goals of the community partner. Doing this exercise will help ensure that those expectations are aligned. If you have not been able to identify a project that meets your goals, you have several options at this point:

1. **Consider compromise.** Go back to your priorities and non-negotiables and consider if you might “give” a little more. This option will likely allow for a more structured experience than the “create your own practicum” option described below.
2. **Try again.** Chances are you have many interests within public health. If you struck out on your first iteration of this exercise, go back to the beginning and think of another idea. Maybe you can change one of the elements above to come up with a more feasible option.
3. **Consult with experts.** Reach out to your ADAPs, APE advisor, Career Services, Student Services, the REAL program staff or your faculty advisor(s) or other mentors. Set up a time to review your interests and goals and gain perspective on your journey.

Action – Either move forward with the GFE opportunity you have identified or choose one of the options outlined in this step.

Remember, one of the keys to success in most public health projects is flexibility. Your plans may not work out exactly as you had hoped – in fact they probably won't! However, that doesn't mean that you won't get important work done in the process. Experiential learning is about both the experience and the learning. Even if you do not do what you "originally" set out to do, you will undoubtedly learn in the process! And learning what settings and type of work you don't like is just as important as trying out an ideal situation. Good luck!