

Example

Evaluating New Field Sites UZ MPH Programme

Objective of document:

This document is designed to provide guidelines for evaluating possible new field sites for placement of MPH trainees for their field activities. The goal is to use objective criteria when considering new sites that will help to assure appropriate situations for the MPH trainees.

These guidelines are designed to be used when meeting with the director and proposed supervisor (if different from the director) of the proposed site. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are considered critical for an adequate field site. Field sites will not be considered for trainee placement if these conditions have not been met. Other questions will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The questions have been organized in three major categories, organizational, supervisory, and resource.

Organizational and managerial capacity

The organization should have sufficient scope to have multiple types of activities available for trainee involvement. The work site should be appropriate to both general goals of the MPH program as well as career goals of the MPH trainee.

1. Is there organizational commitment to hosting a trainee?* Yes No
2. Does the organization have a clear role for the trainee?* Yes No
3. Will the organization treat the trainee as a colleague in training who is doing real work and as part of the team deserving of time and resources rather than as a “student”?* Yes No
4. Can the organization integrate the trainee into the system by including him/her in the information loop and to some extent the decision loop? Yes No
5. Can the organization provide tasks for the trainee that are designed to improve programs, improve the health of the people and achieve the required competencies?* Yes No

Elaborate _____

See note at end of document

6. Does the organization have access to health-related data and access to a population that can be studied either directly or via a link to a public or private health system that can approve this access? * Yes No
Describe _____

7. What investigation and research opportunities are available through the fieldwork site?

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List _____

8. Does the site have enough opportunities for the trainee to learn a variety of skills and fulfill their competencies? * Yes No

The answer to this should take into account the responses to the preceding 7 questions.

Supervisory capacity

The best Field supervisors are experienced epidemiologists with a good understanding of the public health system in their country and a strong commitment to the MPH program. The supervisor should have epidemiology training at least at the level of MPH. He/she should have had experience in practicing public health and past supervisory experience.

1. What percentage of his/her time does a supervisor have available to spend in direct supervision of a trainee? _____

2. Does the supervisor understand the amount of time involved in supervision? Does the supervisor understand the duties of supervision?
There are no clearly correct answers here, but this would need to be reviewed with the proposed supervisor and then re-evaluated on a regular basis if a trainee is assigned.

3. Is the supervisor committed to applied training? Yes No

4. What are the qualifications of the supervisor?

Training _____

Supervisory experience _____

Teaching experience _____

Papers written or presented _____

5. Is there a back-up supervisor? Yes No

• *Desired characteristics for a supervisor:*

- *Expertise in the problems of their area*
- *Strong supervisory skills*
- *Good oral and written communication skills*
- *Interest in developing the skills of other professionals*
- *Time to meet regularly with the MPH staff/faculty and the trainees*
- *Good teaching skills*
- *Commitment to apprenticeship and applied training*
- *Ability to prioritize work and teach this skill to trainees*
- *Ability to allow trainees to make mistakes but able to keep mistakes within bounds with no serious negative effects*
- *Supportive of trainees*
- *Respectful of others*
- *Fairness*

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Resource requirements

1. Is there adequate space for the trainee? * Yes No
2. Is there a computer assigned to the trainee or if not is there a good arrangement for the trainee to use their laptop? * Yes No
3. Are there adequate office supplies for the trainee to complete assignments? Yes No
4. Is there office support available (telephone, fax machine, photocopier, secretarial support)?* Yes No
5. Is there access to transportation or resources for transport to allow the completion of appropriate field projects? Yes No

NOTE: Regarding meeting competencies at the sites.

It is clear that this will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For established sites, it is known that all competencies can be met, although even there, exceptions are sometimes made, e.g. in the case of outbreaks. For new sites, all should be able to have information for a field study, a management evaluation and evaluation of a public health program, but these should be reviewed with each site to be sure such information would be available. The two key competencies that may need a creative approach are outbreak investigations and the surveillance evaluation. Most organizations outside the health ministry are not involved in outbreak investigations in Zimbabwe. For this reason, it will be important for trainees not in traditional sites to be able to investigate outbreaks in various parts of the country. This should be coordinated at the national level. The training site should be made aware that the trainee may be called upon unexpectedly to pursue an outbreak investigation.

Surveillance is also an area where non-traditional sites may not have sufficient programs. In this instance, the trainees should work with the Health Studies Office and the national surveillance officer to identify appropriate projects for analysis.