

**EHESP School
of Public
Health**



**Ecole des
Hautes Etudes
en Santé
Publique**

**The Master
of Public Health
Practicum**

2011- 2012

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Document for the attention of: students, advisors and jury members

Every year, the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Santé Publique* (the EHESP School of Public Health) provides a Master 2 training for students coming from a large number of disciplinary fields in the principles, methods and mechanisms of public health, with the aim of equipping them for positions of responsibility in the systems and institutions serving the public health at national and international levels.

This M2 course lasts one year, and draws on the knowledge acquired during the first year of a Master, or equivalent course.

During their training, students must complete a Practicum lasting 4 months, which is primarily vocational in nature, formalised by a thesis and an oral defence before a jury. This practicum will be supervised by an advisor within the host institution (the « professional advisor »). The MPH coordinator, in agreement with the heads of the various disciplinary tracks, shall appoint an advisor from among the academic staff (the « academic advisor »), who will monitor the progress of the work and provide any methodological advice the student and/or professional advisor may require.

This document on the practicum contains useful information on the following:

- Instructions for the practicum for **students**,
- Supervision by the **professional advisor** and the **academic advisor**,
- Evaluation by the **members of the jury**.

PREPARATION FOR THE PRACTICUM

1 – PRACTICUM OBJECTIVES

The practicum consists in an individual project during which the student will be presented with a problem that he or she will be required to resolve by applying the knowledge acquired over the course of his/her training; the student will also be required to identify and mobilise the correct skills and individuals necessary for the successful completion of his/her task and to build relationships with the various parties involved in the process.

The starting point is a scientific and/or technical issue in the area of public health.

The general format of the practicum is one of problem-solving, requiring the proposal of possible solutions, and a reasoned defence of the one of these solutions his/her has chosen to apply:

- Analyse the problem in its context: collation of information on health issues, in their scientific, technical, socio-political, socio-economic and regulatory dimensions, etc.
- Establish study objectives by specifying the issues to which the project aims to contribute responses,
- Choose and implement the methodological tools that are pertinent to the collation, analysis and criticism of the information and data useful for the achievement of the objectives,
- Propose, study, discuss, select and potentially experiment with recommendations.

The practicum requires the application of the necessary expertise, but also draws on personal resources: initiative, creativity, relations with partners, communication skills, etc.

Depending on the type of work carried out by the institution hosting the student and its current focus, the practicum may be more orientated towards the professional sphere (technology, economics, policy setting or evaluation, management or communication) or the scientific sphere, which may require field study, laboratory work, system analysis and statistical analysis.

2 – SELECTION CRITERIA FOR PRACTICUM TOPICS

The following are indications given to the entities that the EHESP contacts for the proposal of topics.

The interest of the topic:

The topic must enable the contribution of an actual, original clarification: on this basis it cannot consist simply in the application of an already defined method, mechanism or approach to a particular new case, unless this particular case raises sufficient grounds for the questioning of said definition; neither therefore can it consist in a monograph, particularly when the topic has already been the subject of several recent studies;

Feasibility:

There are several elements that can make a project difficult to study: the issue to be assessed may require several years of study; it may be that the topics are too « controversial » thereby making it difficult for the student to find partners, gain access to good information, or put forward proposals without censorship; finally it may be a topic contingent on elements (locations or experiment results, for example) that run too great a risk of not being available by the time of the practicum.

Other criteria:

Consideration should also be given, where applicable, to the ethical requirements or the possible need for confidentiality demanded by the proposing entity; students will effectively be seeking employment at the end of their training and will need to be able to present their work in the recruitment process.

DURING THE PRACTICUM

1 - THE FRAMEWORK REPORT

At the end of the first month of the practicum, the student writes a framework report with the help of his or her professional advisor. This report will be forwarded to the MPH coordinator.

This document, which shall be a **5 pages maximum in length** defines the project topic, establishes the context of the health and regulatory issues, notes the objectives of the project (the questions it aims to answer and the potential scope of the results), the methods and the envisaged schedule of timings.

The framework report mentions the potential for objectives to be readjusted, in line with the conditions under which the work is carried out.

The framework report, equivalent to a project report, is co-signed by the professional advisor, the student and the academic advisor.

2 – EVOLUTION OF THE PROJECT

The practicum may ultimately be carried out under conditions that differ from those envisaged at the outset.

This may be due, for example, to:

- the absence or unavailability of human resources,
- difficulties in or the impossibility of accessing data,
- the quality of this data,
- the obsolete nature of the subject of the practicum itself,
- the emergence of a dimension of the problem not initially considered at the outset,
- certain results obtained,
- etc.

Therefore, as a result, the possibility exists that the project will need to be re-orientated and modified in divergence from the original plan. It is clearly recommended that this be discussed with the advisors.

In all events, the explanations and justifications for these evolutions shall be clearly set out in the written report, in such a way that they may be taken into account in the evaluation and in the assignation of a grade, since the student may indeed not be held responsible.

Additionally, at the time of such modifications, overall coherence should be sought. This may potentially require reflection on the adaptation of the title, objectives, method, etc.).

THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC ADVISORS

It is the student who will be the author of the project.

The student will complete his or her practicum work with the support of the co-signatories of the framework report.

1 – THE PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR

The professional advisor defines the object of the task and vouches for the conditions of its implementation.

The professional advisor will provide support on two levels:

- on an initial level, by facilitating the conditions needed for the practicum (contacts, authorised access to professional « house » documentation, encouraging initiative, marking phases of completion),
- on a second level, providing clarification on the professional culture and know-how, the regulations and working procedures of the host entity.

The professional advisor is the delegated representative of the host institution. In this regard, he or she is:

- deemed to represent the opinion of the institution,
- responsible for the due progression of the practicum, in particular in so far as concerns compliance with the specifications of the work which the student has been charged with completing,
- in a position to notify the academic advisor of any significant evolution during the practicum, both in respect of the topic chosen or as a result of any relational or behavioural problems of the student.

2 – THE ACADEMIC ADVISOR

The support role of the **academic advisor** involves him or her:

- constituting an expert resource insofar as concerns the central theme and/or working methodology of the planned work,
- maintaining contact, as far as necessary, with the professional advisor and liaising with the student, as required, over the timing of information on the progress of the project, in line with the provisional schedule.

At the end of the thesis, the production of the written document shall remain the responsibility of the student and there shall be no obligation for any prior rereading by the academic advisor.

Alongside the academic and professional advisors, students are clearly invited to have recourse, as necessary, to any of the School's internal or external resources that may be useful.

3 – THE PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR'S EVALUATION

The **professional advisor** is asked, as part of the supervision process, to give his or her opinion on:

- the state of progress of the thesis,
- the degree of compliance with the terms of the framework report,
- the logic and overall coherence of the work, in the context of the initial question.

The application of personal resources will also constitute an element for consideration.

Application of personal resources

The personal resources of the student, applied in a professional situation, must be observed and incorporated into the professional advisor's evaluation.

Examples:

- Capacity for analysis and synthesis,
- Organisational and planning skills and autonomy,
- Personal commitment, motivation and assumption of responsibility over the course of the practicum,
- Mobilisation of internal and external parties within the framework of the project,
- Interpersonal communication skills, quality of relationships, capacity to adapt and form part of a team.

The professional advisor shall send this evaluation to the MPH coordinator, in writing (email with a letter in PDF format) by June the 14th 2012 at the latest.

He/she is invited to the oral defence (see the section on the oral defence).

THE THESIS

The thesis must comprise the following major points:

- The topic, the concerns that are the focus of the project and the context,
- The current state of knowledge on the subject,
- The objectives, i.e. the questions which the thesis will aim to answer,
- The material and the methods used,
- The results obtained,
- The interpretation and the discussion of the results,
- The recommendations and proposals for action.

Aside from its scientific and technical contribution, the thesis defines the specifics of the health and institutional factors at stake and makes specific proposals in terms of study, research and actions to be taken, in an approach designed to facilitate the decision-making process. In all events, the author shall be required to have the necessary degree of detachment from the specific context corresponding to the practicum.

NB: It is recommended that the drafting of the thesis be spread over a period of time, in order to enable compliance with the deadlines imposed for the delivery of the work.

FORMATTING

There must be uniformity between the format of all the theses of the academic year.

- **The 1st Cover Page:**

See below sample page. The title must be as explicit as possible, while still being concise (potential for inclusion of a sub-title).



Master of Public Health

Master international de Santé Publique

<Title of the Thesis>

< First name and SURNAME >

Class and year of the Master:

Location of the practicum:

Professional advisor: (name, institution)

Academic advisor: (name, institution)

The document shall follow the below format:

- **Layout of the thesis:**

The thesis must comprise:

- A cover page with a title and sub-title (the words Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Santé Publique **must** figure),
- Acknowledgements page,
- Table of contents showing page numbers,
- List of acronyms used,
- Body of the thesis
- Conclusion,
- Bibliography,
- Index, glossaries, various lists etc.
- List of annexes (with specific references),
- Annexes,
- Summary
- Summary in French.

- **Volume of the thesis:**

The thesis ***should not exceed 30 pages.***

The annexes may be on top of this number, but efforts should be made to limit them to only the strictly necessary.

The font shall be Arial and the font size 11 with space 1.5.

NB: Illustrations should be included solely insofar as they contribute information. For simple graphics, please ensure the choice of colours enables them to be printed legibly in black and white.

- **Body of the Thesis:**

The thesis shall be presented in the format of a draft article for publication in a professional or scientific publication.

In the event that the data provided is very abundant, any that is not essential to the comprehension of the subject may be appended in the annexes.

The titles of tables, graphics, figures and diagrams must be marked in a full and accurate manner. In the event that they have been borrowed from other authors they must be clearly referenced. In the event that these documents (by reason of their format or volume) are appended in the annexes, they shall be cross-referenced in the text.

- **Annexes (written documents, maps, charts and tables, etc.)**

The annexes shall contain documents that are useful to the understanding of the principal text.

Cross-references to the annexes shall be made in the text of the thesis.

- **Abstract in French**

In addition to the English language summary, the document shall include a half-page abstract in French, preceded by the translation of the title of the thesis.

- **Abstract**

The abstract of the thesis is between 250 and 300 words long, made up of simple, short sentences. The title and abstract together must form a comprehensible whole.

Informative, it provides the answers to four questions:

- What was the reason for the project? (context)
- How was this project carried out? (resources and methods)
- What discoveries were made? (results)
- What conclusions or generalisations may consequently be drawn? (conclusions)

The keywords are chosen in a documentary basis appropriate to the subject.
The jury will evaluate the quality of this abstract.

THE THESIS SHALL BE UPLOADED BY THE STUDENT ON THE REAL PLATFORM ON THE 11TH OF JUNE 2012 BEFORE 12:00PM

- **Printing**

The printing of the thesis shall be **recto-verso**, in **04 copies**, which **shall be remitted on the 18th of June 2012**.

- 1 copy for the student,*
- 1 copy for the professional advisor,*
- 1 copy for the academic advisor.*
- 1 copy for the MPH coordinator*

the student being responsible for remitting these corresponding copies.

CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE THESIS

The jury shall assign grades to the theses.

The grading shall take account of both the oral and written aspects.

- Written thesis: 50% of the final grade
- Oral defence: 30% of the final grade
- Argument put forward in response to the questions of the jury during the oral defence: 20% of the grade of the practicum.

The jury also considers:

- elements gathered during the oral exchange with the professional and academic advisors,
- written evaluations from these same advisors which also cover the individual resources applied (see section on the role of advisors) and the assimilation or otherwise of advice given at the various stages.

1 - EVALUATION OF THE ORAL DEFENCE

The oral defence should enable the evaluation of, on the one hand, the student's ability to present his or her work in a synthetic manner to a group of people who are not necessarily specialists in the issue (but who are however all « scientists »), and on the other hand, the student's ability to defend the choices made or options selected over the course of the project and, in general, respond to the questions of the members of the jury.

The jury may use the below table in their evaluation of the oral defence:

PARTIES	CRITERIA	EVALUATION
PRESENTATION	Quality of the oral presentation and aids Clarity Coherence	
DISCUSSION WITH THE JURY	Responsiveness Honesty Relevance of answers	

2 - EVALUATION OF THE WRITTEN PART

Below are some categories to assist in the evaluation of the written part.

The importance assigned to each category will depend on the type of thesis, which may be of a more professional nature or a more scientific nature.

However, a thesis of a professional nature must tackle the scientific aspect with full rigour. Likewise, the development of a scientific thesis must be set in a context of professional usefulness.

PARTS		CRITERIA	
CONTEXT	Bibliography: scientific and technical Legal and regulatory framework Identification of the agents in the field and their institutions Identification of opinions, Status of opinions and perceptions Synthesis of the contextualisation (what is the decision to be made? Is enough known to take action? What elements are needed to take a decision?)	Up-to-date, complete, appropriate, well understood (in relation to the teaching imparted) Complete, appropriate Complete, relevant Logical, appropriate	Evaluations
OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT		Clear, precise and suited to the research of answers to the question posed	

METHOD	<p>Analysis and selection of the information available and to be acquired</p> <p>Definition and application of a specific protocol for research or for the collection or obtaining of missing information</p> <p>Presentation of results</p> <p>Discussion of results</p>	<p>Transparent, logical, pertinent, rigorous</p> <p>Rigour, pertinence, feasibility, suitability to objectives. Appropriateness of the tools used, rigour, transparency</p> <p>Complete, coherent, organised</p> <p>Rigorous, critical, far-sighted</p>	
PROPOSALS	Recommendations for actions and discussion in the context of the objectives	Logical, adapted in line with the initial question, proportionate, feasible, linked to the context.	

FORMAT	<p>Documents: Written report on paper and in electronic format,</p> <p>Summary Summary on paper and in electronic format (for confidential theses),</p>	<p>The jury may consider the absence of some of these documents in the grading process</p> <p>Restrictions applicable to the presentation, including the length of the text, have been respected</p> <p>Style (conciseness, accuracy), spelling, syntax, pertinence and quality of the illustrations</p> <p>Quality of the summary, compliance with instructions</p>	
PUBLICATION	<p>The work may be classified as confidential at the request of the proposing party</p> <p>The jury may decide that the thesis will not be publishable</p> <p>In the event of the confidentiality of the thesis, the student must provide an abstract that can be made public</p>	At the discretion of the jury depending on the sensitivity of the subject or the manifest insufficiency of the work carried out.	

THE JURY

1 – THE ORAL DEFENCE

Inform your professional advisor of the dates of the oral defences between the 02th and 06th of July 2012 (date to be confirmed) as the earliest opportunity. If there are associated time constraints, notify the MPH coordinator.

The Oral Defence:

The student cannot simply present a summary of the thesis, but rather must focus on some principal points of his or her work. However, the objectives and the results discussed should always be presented.

The oral defence is public (except in the case of confidential theses) and lasts around **40 minutes**, according to the following schedule:

- **15 minutes** for the oral accounts of the candidate
- **25 minutes** of questions from the jury to the candidate and the candidates responses,

At the end of the oral defence, the deliberations will take place in private (members of the jury and advisors).

The professional advisors, when present at the oral defence, will be invited, by the president, to give their point of view, the motivations that led to the proposal of the subject, the conditions of its realisation, their expectations and their level of satisfaction. If absent, the professional advisors will have provided this information in their final evaluation report that will be read during the jury meeting.

The academic advisor, in turn, will be asked to provide clarifications to the jury.

The interventions of the professional advisor and the academic advisor will be made during the deliberation.

2 - THE ROLE OF THE EXAMINERS (RAPPORTEURS) OF THE WRITTEN THESIS

As soon as the students' written theses are received, these documents are sent out to the members of the jury within the shortest possible timescale, accompanied by this orientation document and the « Thesis Evaluation » table.

For each thesis, two *rapporteurs* are appointed by the MPH coordinator, from among the heads of the Master modules and, when needed, MPH faculty. Having made an in-depth analysis of the thesis before the oral defence, they will put forward their evaluation of the work and ask the first questions after the oral defence.

3 - THE JURY PROCESS

Depending on the number of students enrolled on the course, the oral defences may be held over one or two days.

The jury is made up of the heads of the Master tracks, the *rapporteurs* and the course coordinator. The heads of the modules may be invited to sit on the jury and to ask questions within the limits of the time available.