

JOSEPH L. MAILMAN  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**APEX**   
APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

**RESOURCE GUIDE**

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# Welcome & Introduction



## Welcome!

This APEx Resource Guide includes the essential information needed to help you find and complete an academically rewarding and professionally fulfilling APEx. It is an easy-to-follow step-by-step approach to the information, tools, and strategies needed before, during and after your APEx is completed. It includes guidance required for planning, documenting, performing, and evaluating your APEx. Your department, and Faculty Advisor in collaboration with the Office of Field Practice (OFP) are committed and excited to support every phase of your APEx journey.

If you have any questions, please contact [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu).

With kind regards,

*The Office of Field Practice Team*

# Introduction and Overview

## **WHAT IS AN APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE (APEX)**

Through a planned, supervised, and evaluated Applied Practice Experience (APEX), Masters of Public Health (MPH), Masters of Health Administration (MHA) and Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) students apply classroom knowledge and skills to meaningful fieldwork and make significant contributions to public health organizations and agencies, locally and globally.

According to the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH); *“All graduate professional public health degree students must develop skills in basic public health concepts and demonstrate the application of these concepts through a practice experience that is relevant to students’ areas of specialization. It must be planned, supervised, and evaluated.”*

APEX Projects address domestic and global issues in all areas of public health practice: environmental health sciences, health policy and management, population and family health, epidemiology, sociomedical sciences and biostatistics. It provides an opportunity for students to explore their passions while practicing their skills in real world settings.

The APEX is also of substantial value to students on a professional level, beyond meeting graduation requirements. The APEX enables you to synthesize and integrate your area of expertise and utilizes a set of foundational and departmental competencies. It is also an opportunity to develop professional networks, gain direct experience, utilize existing and develop new skills and competencies. Examples of past projects and host agencies are listed on the following page.

**398 ORGANIZATIONS**

**33 COUNTRIES**

**26 STATES**

**EXAMPLES OF HOST SITES:**

AfriChild

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

Columbia Global Centers

Community League of the Heights

Deloitte Consulting

Doctors without Borders

Emblem Health

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Human Rights Watch

Heluna Health

ICAP at Columbia University

NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

US Department of Health & Human Services

World Health Organization

**EXAMPLES OF APEX PROJECTS:**

Participation in a Randomized Clinical Trial to Improve Children's Health and School Readiness.

Application of a Community Based Nutrition Needs Assessment.

Development and Implementation of a Media Based Water and Sanitation Education Initiative.

Evaluation of a Sexuality Education Program for At-Risk Youth.

Qualitative Data Analysis to enhance an HIV-AIDS Prevention Program.

Meta-Analysis of the Benefits of Personalized Medicine Approach in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer.

Evaluation of Racial Inequities in Mental Health, Substance Use, and Criminal Justice Outcomes following NYC Cannabis Decriminalization.



# APEX Supports and Resources

## DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT

The APEX is supported primarily through your Department including your faculty advisor and departmental APEX coordinator. Departmental APEX supports include seminars, listing of specific departmental opportunities, and organizes post APEX activities. Your Department approves all required APEX documentation including Scope of Work, APEX Completion Form and Faculty Assessment Form. Additional support can also be obtained through Certificate Leads. Students with a certificate in Global Health or Public Health and Humanitarian Action (PHHA) have additional APEX requirements.

## APEX DEPARTMENT CONTACTS AND HOURLY REQUIREMENTS

Table 1 indicates the minimum hourly requirements for the APEX by department and degree as well as the two certificates with unique APEX requirements. It also provides the name of the APEX lead for each department.

## THE OFFICE OF FIELD PRACTICE

In addition to your Department, the APEX is supported by the Office of Field Practice (OFP), Office of Careers Services, and the Office of Student Affairs. OFP works across the departments and coordinates the school wide infrastructure needed to plan, conduct, and evaluate your APEX. Offering an array of resources, it builds lasting liaisons between students, departments, faculty advisors, and community collaborators. Directed by Associate Dean of Field Practice, Dr. Cassie Landers, OFP identifies new domestic and international APEX host organizations; coordinates and supervises domestic fellowships and international APEX programs; solicits opportunities from a wide array of partnership agencies; and provides logistical support for students and site supervisors.

APEX support is also provided through the Offices of Career Services and Student Affairs. The specific tasks for each of these three offices are highlighted in Table 2.

### Have a Question?

The Office of Field Practice is eager to answer your APEX questions. Here are a few of the support services we provide. We look forward to hearing from you.

- Attend Field Practice-sponsored seminars and presentations.
- Explore the Field Practice Canvas site regularly to find guidance and opportunities, as well as content of past presentations and notices about upcoming Field Practice activities.
- Ask for an individual appointment by sending your availability to [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu)
- Ask questions, send comments or requests to our general inbox: [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu)

DEPARTMENT / CERTIFICATE	MINIMUM HOURLY REQUIREMENTS	DEPARTMENTAL CONTACT
<a href="#">General Public Health</a>	140 Hours	Juli Parker (jp3600)
<a href="#">Biostatistics</a>	150 - 300 hours for 2-year and Dual MPH	Lucia Li (ll3414) Dr. Martina Pavlicova (mp2370)
<a href="#">Environmental Health Sciences</a>	150 - 300 hours for 2-year and Dual MPH	Nina Kulacki (njc2128)
<a href="#">Epidemiology</a>	240 hours for 2-year MPH 140 hours for Accelerated MPH	Dr. Batya Elul (be2124)
<a href="#">Health Policy and Management</a>	Full-time summer APEX for 10 weeks (approx. 350 hours)	Beth Bird (bs2520)
<a href="#">Population and Family Health</a>	240 hours for 2-year and Dual MPH 140 hours for Accelerated MPH	Chelsea Kolff (cak2190) Latoya Hart (lh3327)
<a href="#">Sociomedical Sciences</a>	240 hours for 2-year and Dual MPH 140 hours for Accelerated MPH	Charmagne Jones (cdj2121) Katherine Plummer (kp3094)
<a href="#">Global Health Certificate</a>	3 to 6-month international APEX in a low or middle-income setting (minimum 12 weeks).	Dr. Manuela Orjuela (mao5) Sarah Dugan Francis (sld2167)
<a href="#">PHHA Certificate</a>	International humanitarian and/or public health crisis setting for 10-12 weeks	Jill Brennick (jb922) Dr. Sara Casey (sec42)

**TABLE 1** Departmental APEX requirements and contacts



FIELD PRACTICE	CAREER SERVICES	STUDENT AFFAIRS
Develops, coordinates, and manages domestic and international APEX sites, offers Fellowships and distributes scholarships.	Lists jobs and internships that may qualify as an APEX.	Provides support and referrals to university resources.
Coordinates APEX presentations and posts projects open to students across MSPH.	Identifies funding opportunities.	Supports students experiencing APEX related challenges.
Maintains APEX database, completion forms and related guidelines; distributes stipends and conducts IRB prescreening.	Reviews resumes and cover letters.	Works with student support groups to promote APEX opportunities.
Provides general guidelines and support to students, faculty, and staff.	Provides career counseling and interviewing skills.	
Reviews international travel to medium and high-risk settings.		Reviews students' international travel to medium and high-Risk settings.

**TABLE 2** APEX Support: Field Practice, Career Services, and Student Affairs

# When does the APEX take place?

The majority of two-year MPH and MHA students fulfill the APEX requirement during summer months between the first and second year. Accelerated or GPH students can complete the APEX requirement during the late spring or early summer semester. Students in the 4+1 program most often complete the APEX during the last year at Mailman or as scheduled by their specific program. Global Health certificate students may choose a 6-month international APEX which includes an additional 3 months during the first semester of the second year of the program. The following table summarizes the recommended timing of the APEX by degree.

PROGRAM	APEX COMPLETION
2-Year MPH, MHA, and DrPH Students	The summer between the first and second year.
Global Health Certificate MPH Students	The three summer months between the first and second year; or six months starting in the summer and including the fall semester.
General Public Health (GPH) and Accelerated Students	The spring of their first year, or the summer following the first year
4+1 MPH Students	The summer of their second year at Mailman, after fully completing the CORE courses.

**TABLE 3** Suggested APEX Completion by Program

# Initial APEx Exploration: Questions to consider

The next chapter outlines the timing and steps involved in planning your APEx. In the first semester of your first year, it is important to explore the wide range of public health programs and projects. While you may have arrived at Mailman with a clear idea of your interests and expectations, the Core will introduce a wide range of new issues and emerging challenges in public health programs and policies. It is a time to explore and consider new as well as existing area of interests as you set your APEx priorities.

The following questions can be considered during this initial exploratory phase.

- Are there specific skills or competencies that you would like to acquire or strengthen?
- What are the thematic issues or context areas do you find most interesting?
- What organizations, agencies or institutions would be helpful in developing your professional network?
- Do you want to stay within the tristate area, or travel domestically or internationally?
- If you plan to travel internationally, how will you cover your costs?
- Do you have contacts both within and outside of Mailman who could help you locate meaningful APEx opportunities?
- What are your financial needs? Do you need to obtain a paid APEx?

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# Step I: Planning your APEx



This chapter includes information on the resources available to help plan your APEx. It provides a detailed timeline of activities throughout the year. It also highlights general information on OFP Fellowships and additional funding opportunities. Students considering a research project will also find information on the IRB process.

# APEX Timeline of Activities



**FIGURE 1** APEX Timeline of Activities



# Finding your APEX

As described below, there are many ways students find their APEX including departmental listings via newsletters, emails, or departmental seminars; Field Practice Canvas site; [Career Link](#) and personal networks.

Remember Mailman is your network! Make use of your relationships with your professors, departmental advisors, departmental coordinators/directors, and the Field Practice team. This extensive network can provide referrals and introductions to people and organizations that lead you to an exciting and professionally rewarding APEX.

## I. GETTING READY



Update your resume and cover letters:

- Make an appointment with Career Services.
- Adapt your cover letter and other materials to the project of your interest.
- Include coursework in progress.



Reflect upon your newly acquired classroom based skills that you are eager to apply.



Apply only to APEX projects that interest you:

- Be aware of deadlines for opportunities with large international or government agencies - these are often quite competitive.
- Be sure to explore and apply to a range of opportunities.



Keep a clear record of your applications and plans for follow up activities.

## II. EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES



### DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT

- Discuss your interest with your faculty advisor, departmental coordinator and certificate lead - they can suggest sites that have hosted students in the past.
- Look out for opportunities in newsletters, emails and departmental seminars.



### FIELD PRACTICE CANVAS SITE

The Field Practice team is eager to support you. Check our Canvas site for:

- Postings of domestic and international APEx projects
- General guidelines, information, seminars and presentations
- Drop-in office hours
- Individual appointments (email [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu))



### CAREER LINK INTERNSHIPS

- [Career Link](#) posts opportunities with a range of public and private agencies.
- Consult the Field Practice team for guidance on adapting an internship to meet Mailman's APEx requirements.



### INDIVIDUAL SEARCH & PERSONAL NETWORKS

- Remember Mailman is your network! Reach out to professors, advisors, department coordinators etc.
- Your contacts can make introductions and refer you to organizations that may be a perfect fit for your APEx.

# APEX Travel Stipends

As indicated in Table 4, MSPH offers a small travel stipend to MPH, MHA, and DrPH students. The stipend, which is administered by the OFP, is meant to defray some of the travel costs incurred during the APEX. Stipends are processed automatically once your Scope of Work is approved by your faculty advisor and your department administrator/APEX coordinator. Once your SOW is approved, OFP will submit your stipend for processing to the Office of Financial Aid (usually starting in mid-April). The stipends are processed in batches every two weeks and the disbursement process can take approximately 15 days. For most students, the stipend is deposited to your student account within three to four weeks after all approvals are completed and all other requirements are met. If you have a direct deposit, the stipend will be reflected in your SSOL account. If you do not have direct deposit, a check will be sent to the mailing address listed on your SSOL account. Students completing an international APEX, must comply with the CU Travel guidelines and procedures in addition to having an approved SOW, to receive their stipends.

International students should be aware that they will be taxed on any stipends received. For further information, please visit <https://www.sfs.columbia.edu/tax-info>.

To receive a summer travel APEX stipend, the SOW form must be approved by June to process the stipend before the end of the fiscal year. Students submitting a SOW after the stipend deadline date, will not receive the APEX travel stipend. For students doing their APEX during the school year, the stipend will be processed during the semester in which the SOW is submitted.

PROGRAM	AMOUNT	APEX COMPLETION
Local (tri-state area: NY, NJ & CT) or remote from any location	\$250	This stipend is available for students working locally either on site, remote, or hybrid.
Domestic (out of tri-state area & Canada)	\$500	If your APEX is located outside of the tri-state area, but you are engaged in remote work only, you will receive the \$250 stipend.
International, 2- to 3-month APEX	\$1,000	This stipend is for students staying abroad for at least 8 weeks.
International, 6-month Global Certificate	\$2,000	You are eligible for this stipend amount if you are a Global Health Certificate student completing a six-month APEX abroad.

**TABLE 4** APEX Travel Stipend

# APEx Funding

Your APEx can be paid or unpaid. APEx positions posted on the Field Practice Canvas site indicate if the agency/organization is offering a stipend/payment. Sites offering a payment or stipend are required to use their internal mechanisms to pay students. Some organizations, such as international agencies, community-based organizations or nonprofits, may not have the financial resources to provide a stipend/payment to students but offer a challenging and rewarding opportunity to contribute to public health projects.

The Office of Field Practice provides information on funding opportunities both within and outside of MSPH. Funding opportunities and suggestions for students pursuing an unpaid APEx, can be found on the Field Practice Canvas site. Students should consider their funding needs and opportunities as soon as possible, as grants and other funding opportunities often have early deadlines and specific requirements. Students can also access funding search engines to identify funding opportunities ([www.candid.org](http://www.candid.org)). Students must be logged into Columbia University's Library to obtain access this membership-based resource. The library provides support in developing online searches. Students can also consult the OFP for additional funding resources.

# OFP Fellowships and Scholarships

The Office of Field Practice coordinates four APEX Fellowships and the Huo Family Scholarship, described below. All MPH and MHA students enrolled in a 2-year program are eligible to apply. Fellows and Huo scholars receive a \$5,000 stipend. Information regarding the Fellowships and the application process can be found on the OFP Canvas site.

- **APEX Food Fellowship** is an initiative of the Dean's Office and introduces students to innovative public health interventions to enhance food justice systems. The Fellowship offers APEX projects with a range of local, regional, and national organizations. Food Fellows apply their skills in policy development, program planning, implementation, evaluation, and advocacy. The Food Fellowship is administered by OFP in partnership with Mark Bitman and Dr. Sandra Albrecht Co-directors, Food Systems and Public Health Certificate at Mailman.
- **FORWARD Community APEX Fellowship** is a component of the FORWARD Initiative. It provides APEX opportunities with organizations serving the Harlem, Washington Heights, Inwood, and Bronx communities. Through this Fellowship, students will contribute to antiracist health initiatives focused on health access, service delivery, program enhancement, sustainability, and health education within marginalized communities. In addition, in collaboration with the Columbia Cancer Center, Fellows can work with a CUIMC-community collaborative initiative representing best practices in academic-community partnerships.
- **United Way New York City's Choose Healthy Life (UW CHL) APEX Fellowship program.** The UWNYP Choose Healthy Life Program is a faith-based initiative to increase the capacity of churches to implement health promotion efforts and increase access to screenings, vaccinations, and health promotion services in our communities. This initiative is supported through generous funding from the New York State Department of Health. UW CHL Fellows will be placed at the UWNYP offices and in CHL churches and communities to work on related programming. Fellows will have the opportunity to explore and contribute to innovative approaches to address health disparities grounded in strong community networks.
- **Interprofessional Community Engagement Fellowship (ICEF)** provides APEX opportunities that enable students to collaborate with government, public, and private partners in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Working in interprofessional and intersectoral teams, Fellows will cultivate the unique set of applied community engagement skills needed to navigate a range of complex public health challenges. The APEX experience and additional educational opportunities will broaden Fellows' global perspective and provide an opportunity to work in partnership with communities in the design and implementation of innovative public health research and programs.
- **Huo Family APEX Scholarships.** In addition to these Fellowships, the Office of Field Practice distributes \$5,000 scholarships through the Huo Family Foundation. MPH and MHA students offered an unpaid APEX with a non-profit organization or government agency committed to serving the public good are eligible to apply.



# Accepting and Declining offers



Once you have received an APEX offer, here are some questions you might want to consider:

- What is the expected APEX timeline and objectives?
- What are the APEX activities and project deliverable(s)?
- Does the APEX involve human subjects' research or direct contact with vulnerable populations? If yes, is there an existing IRB?
- Where am I expected to work? Is this an in-person, hybrid, or remote assignment?
- What is the work and supervision schedule?



Discuss the APEX opportunity with your Faculty Advisor and/or APEX departmental administrator. If you decide to decline the APEX, it is important to act professionally and:

- **Express your gratitude for the opportunity:** Thank the organization for their time and consideration.
- **Provide an explanation for your decision:** Offer an honest and clear explanation for your decision to decline.
- **Maintain a professional and respectful demeanor:** Keep your response respectful and indicate your interest to stay in contact. This is an opportunity to build your professional network.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is the difference between an APEX and an internship?**

An APEX must be planned, supervised, and evaluated by a Mailman faculty. An internship can qualify as an APEX if it meets the approval of the Faculty Advisor and satisfies the criteria for supervision, planning and evaluation. You can also complete an internship, but it cannot be credited as your APEX.

## **Can I complete my APEX at my current work site?**

Yes. Agencies or organizations with projects and or initiatives designed to enhance the public health and well-being qualify as acceptable APEX site. However, it is important that the APEX is defined as a separate activity that is distinct and separate from your current work roles and responsibilities. It must be a unique and separate project.

## **Are academic centers or departments affiliated with Columbia or other academic settings appropriate as an APEX site?**

An APEX may take place in a wide range of locations including governmental, nongovernmental, nonprofit, industry, and for-profit agencies. To be appropriate for APEX projects, university-affiliated settings must be primarily focused on community engagement, and in collaboration with partners outside the university. The project should benefit both the community partner site as well as satisfy students required public health competencies.

## **Is there flexibility in the APEX timeline?**

Most students complete their APEX during the summer months between the first and second year of the MPH. There is flexibility in this timeline particularly for part time, accelerated, and students enrolled in the 4+1-degree programs. Depending on personal circumstances, students can be granted permission to fulfill the APEX requirement outside of the usual time frame.

## **Are international students eligible to receive the full Mailman travel stipend?**

Yes, international students will receive the Mailman stipend. The stipend will be directly deposited into your student account. International students should be aware that stipends will be subject to taxation. For further information please refer to <https://sfs.columbia.edu/content/tax-information>.

**Are international students returning home to complete their APEx required to register their travel and follow the travel guidelines?**

Yes, all international students traveling to their home countries to complete an APEx are required to register their travel with ISOS. International Travel is managed by Global Travel. Information regarding international travel can be found on the Field Practice canvas site or by consulting; [About Global Travel and the International Travel Planning Policy | Global Travel \(columbia.edu\)](#). If you are traveling to you home country strictly for personal/leisure travel, these policies do not apply to you.

**Will I receive the international travel stipend if I return to my home country to complete my APEx?**

Students traveling to their home county to complete an APEx will receive an international travel stipend only if the APEx is in person. If you are traveling home to complete a remote or hybrid APEx you are eligible for the remote travel stipend, not for the international travel stipend.

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## Step II: The APEX Tracking Database



# The Online APEX Tracking Process

As highlighted in Table 5, the APEX online system tracks students' APEX through the Scope of Work; APEX Completion Form; and the Faculty Assessment Form. The purpose and process for completing each of these forms will be described in more detail in the following chapters of the Resource Guide. Copies of the forms can be found in the [Appendix](#).

FORM	PURPOSE	WHO RECEIVES AND MANAGES THESE FORMS?
Scope of Work (SOW)	Documents your plan for the APEX, provides clarity about your project for site supervisor, ensures departmental and CEPH requirements are being met	Departmental advisor and APEX director/coordinator
Student APEX Completion Form (ACF)	Ensures that the plan set out in the SOW was completed. Allows students to document changes to the plan, upload work products, and evaluate the experience	Departmental advisor and APEX director/coordinator Registrar uses approved forms to clear for graduation
Faculty Assessment Form (FAF)	Allows faculty to review samples of the student's field practice and attest to competency attainment. Allows dialogue to review questions as needed	Departmental advisor and APEX director/coordinator/registrar uses approved forms to clear for graduation

**TABLE 5** APEX Online Tracking Database



# Completing your Scope of Work

The Scope of Work (SOW) is one of the most important tools for planning your APEX and meeting your departmental requirements. The quality and comprehensiveness of the information provided in the SOW will help to ensure a successful APEX. The [APEX Tracking Database](#) is linked here, or can be found by pasting the address below on your browser:

<https://www.sac-cu.org/MSPH/PracTrac/> .

Once on the Database, click on your UNI to access the SOW form.

The SOW is divided into the following sections:

- Student Information
- APEX Information
- On-site Supervisor Information
- IRB Status
- Project Description
- Learning contract

The information contained in the Project Description section of the SOW form is the most critical component of the APEX. Table 6 outlines the information needed to complete the project description, Section E on the SOW.

The screenshot displays the 'APEX Scope of Work' form. At the top, there is a blue header with the text 'Mailman School of Public Health Applied Practice Experience (APEX) Tracking' and three buttons: 'Download .pdf', 'Save for later', and 'Final approval'. Below the header, the form is titled 'APEX Scope of Work' and is divided into two main sections:

- Section A: Student Information**
  - UNI: \_\_\_\_\_
  - First Name/Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Department: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Degree: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Certificate: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Student Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  - APEX Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_
- Section B: APEX Information**
  - Information about your host organization is requested in this section. Provide the location information about where you will be doing your APEX. If you are working remotely provide the host organization's headquarters location.**
  - APEX Position: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Organization Type: \_\_\_\_\_
  - City/State/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Country: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Web site URL (enter None if not available): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Location/category: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Will your APEX be in-person, hybrid or remote? \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PURPOSE</b>	Describe the overall purpose and goal of your APEX.
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	Highlight the mission of your APEX site and the anticipated contribution of your APEX project. Provide additional relevant background information.
<b>WORKPLAN</b>	Define your role, responsibilities, and planned APEX activities as discussed with your APEX site supervisor.
<b>METHODS</b>	Provide details on the research methods, tools, and program frameworks you plan to apply in completing your work.
<b>DELIVERABLES</b>	Outline the work products you plan to develop and submit to your host APEX site.
<b>TIMELINE</b>	Delineate a timeline of your proposed activities to help you to fulfill your commitments in the time allotted.
<b>RESOURCES</b>	Clarify the resources provided by the site and identify additional resources you may need (e.g. any costs or needs for transportation, software, educational materials, workspace) to complete your tasks.
<b>CHALLENGES</b>	List challenges anticipated in completing your APEX (e.g. using new skills, new technology, language barriers, new cultural paradigms etc.) and how you plan to address them.
<b>LEARNING CONTRACT</b>	Select and describe at least 3 foundational and 2 departmental competencies you plan to apply or practice during your APEX.

**TABLE 6** Scope of Work: APEX Project Description (Section E)

# APEX Practice-Based Products

The site, agency or organization that hosts your APEX as well as your academic department expects you to develop professional-quality practice-based products completed by the end of your APEX. Students are required to submit at least two products for review by their faculty advisor. Examples of products commonly requested by host agencies are described in the following Table. Faculty advisors will assess students' practice-based products to ensure that a minimum of three foundational and two departmental competencies have been strengthened through the APEX.

APEX practice-based products are listed in Table 7 below. Examples of past agency APEX project descriptions and suggested deliverables are highlighted in Table 8 below. Additional APEX project descriptions and required skills can be found in the [Appendix](#).

**NOTE:** Students are not required to upload practice-based products, such as data analysis and proposals, that are solely for proprietary use by their APEX organization or agency. In this case, students should provide a document that describes the goals and objectives of the activity they engaged in, the methods or process used, as well as their specific contributions to the practice-based product or deliverable.

<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE PROVISION</b>	Coordinate, plan, implement services for program and/or community partners. Documentation can include summary report, memos, and photos (with explanatory description).
<b>EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM</b>	Design educational interventions including modules/sections/sessions, learning objectives, tasks, and additional resources.
<b>EDUCATIONAL TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS</b>	Create workshops or trainings including detailed curriculum design, outcomes, learning objectives, activities, and resources or information.
<b>PROGRAM EVALUATION</b>	Design and/or implement program evaluation including objectives, methods (data collection/analysis), schedule, budget, reporting, dissemination.
<b>HEALTH EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS</b>	Develop communications or campaign including analysis of target audience and potential barriers, goals, objectives, messages, dissemination approaches (videos, podcasts, website) and evaluation strategies.
<b>LITERATURE REVIEWS</b>	Prepare a literature review organized chronologically, thematically, or methodologically, and include a conclusion or recommendations.
<b>PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	Develop funding proposal including purpose, background, proposed solutions, scope of work, roles, budget, goals, and schedule/timeline.
<b>SURVEILLANCE TOOLS</b>	Design and/or implement tools for surveying and surveillance of population based public health issues.
<b>RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT</b>	Design research models/strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of health research; develop/pretest tools and instruments.
<b>DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS</b>	Contribute to the collection and analysis of research data.
<b>RESEARCH REPORT</b>	Prepare a formative or summative report including a table of contents, headings/subheadings, citations/references.
<b>HEALTH SYSTEMS ASSESSMENT</b>	Assess and identify strategies to enhance quality of care, access, and availability of services.

**TABLE 7** APEx Practice-Based Products

<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>NATIONAL CENTER FOR DISASTER PREVENTION</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Social Media for Disaster Prevention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist project manager and instructional designer to use social media to promote NCDP work and projects.</li> <li>• Compose marketing and promotional materials and branded items.</li> <li>• Research competitor marketing and communications.</li> <li>• Assist with event materials and preparation.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed promotional materials including brochures, flyers, and email blasts.</li> <li>• Analysis of market competition.</li> <li>• Strategic marketing plan.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong writing and oral communication skills.</li> <li>• Knowledge of communication and marketing strategies.</li> <li>• Experience using social media tools.</li> <li>• Some knowledge of public health or disaster preparedness.</li> </ul>
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY BASED NUTRITION PROGRAM</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Nutrition Needs Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement a community-based participatory research project to understand dietary and exercise habits, nutritional awareness, and perception of barriers to providing or consuming healthy food.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report analyzing the structural accessibility of healthy food, diet, and exercise habits of a sample of residents and businesses.</li> <li>• Propose hypotheses on the sources of diet-related illness.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong communication skills and ability to engage with a diverse population.</li> <li>• Epidemiology and/or collecting empirical and secondary source information.</li> <li>• Excellent written communication skills.</li> <li>• Experience in survey design and interview techniques.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 8** Examples of past APEx projects and practice-based products / deliverables

# APEX and Public Health Competencies

The Master of Public Health (MPH) is aligned with twenty-two competencies organized across 8 domains established by the Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH). These include Evidence-based approaches to public health, Public Health & Health Care Systems; Planning & Management to Promote Health; Policy in Public Health; Leadership; Communication; Interprofessional and/or Intersectoral Practice, and Systems Thinking. The [Appendix](#) contains a complete list of the CEPH competencies.

Strengthening existing and developing new competences is the essence of the APEX. To ensure that the APEX fulfills this expectation, students will choose a minimum of three of the 22 specific competencies listed across any of the eight public health domains, as well as a minimum of two departmental competencies. Departmental competencies are listed in the [Appendix](#). The Master of Health Administration (MHA) has similar requirements as well from the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME).

Both foundational competencies and departmental competencies are included on the Scope of Work (SOW). Based upon APEX goals and objectives, students will select the competencies they intend to utilize throughout the APEX. In completing the APEX completion form, students will also have an opportunity to review and document any additional competencies utilized throughout their APEX.

# The APEX and IRB Approval

An important part of completing your SOW and preparing for your APEX is determining if your APEX requires approval by the Columbia University (CU) Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB is an administrative body established to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects. An IRB has authority to approve, require modifications to or disapprove research. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, all human subjects research requires review and approval by an IRB. This policy applies to student APEX which involve human subjects' research.

Determining whether your APEX involves human subjects research and requires CU IRB approval can be tricky. To make this determination:

- Use the IRB guidance and consult the [IRB case studies](#).
- Speak with your faculty advisor (Biostatistics, Environmental Health, Population and Family Health, Sociomedical Sciences) or departmental APEX director (Health Policy and Management, Epidemiology) before finalizing your SOW.
- Speak with your site supervisor as you work through the [guidance](#).
- Use the IRB decision aid in the Appendix to determine if your APEX includes human subject research and requires CU IRB approval.

After working through the IRB guidance, reviewing the case studies, and consulting with your faculty advisor or departmental APEX administrator, you will decide on one of the following 3 options:

**CU IRB approval not required:** This will be the case for most APEX.

**IRB pre-screen required:** In a few cases, input from an expert will be needed to determine whether IRB approval is required. You can obtain such input by submitting an [IRB pre-screen request](#). Pre-screening should only be sought if:

- You and your faculty advisor or departmental APEX director are uncertain if CU IRB approval is required even after working through the IRB guidance and case studies.
- You are conducting program evaluation that entails collecting identifiable information on sensitive topics.
- Your faculty advisor or departmental APEX director directs you to obtain an IRB pre-screen for any other reason.

**CU IRB approval required:** If you are in this group, you will work with your faculty advisor or departmental APEX director to submit a protocol to the IRB. Before preparing your protocol, review the [examples of IRB submissions](#) for student APEX. Follow the step-by-step instructions for preparing an IRB submission.



# International APEX Travel Approval Process

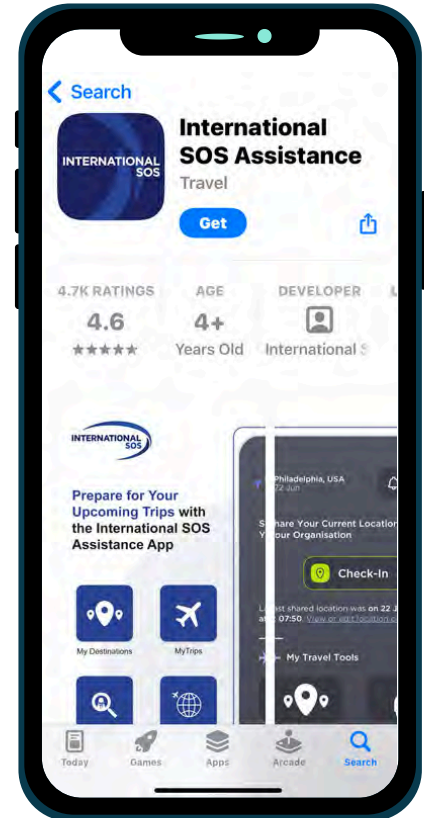
Students traveling internationally must comply with the Columbia University travel policy and requirements. APEX travel is managed jointly by Columbia University Global Travel, OSA and OFP. This Pre-Travel Guidance outlines the process for all Mailman students planning an International APEX. Detailed information can be found on the International APEX Module available on the Field Practice Canvas Site.

All students travelling abroad for their APEX are required to download the ISOS app. The ISOS app provides updated travel information and can be used to register changes in travel. In case of emergency, the App can be used to contact ISOS for immediate assistance.

## ALL STUDENTS TRAVELING INTERNATIONALLY MUST:

- Identify the [ISOS travel risk ratings](#) and [ISOS elevated evacuation](#) status for the APEX city and country.
- Complete and submit APEX [Scope of Work](#), including the embedded assumption of risk waiver.
- Schedule a [Pre-travel Consultation](#) with [Student Health on Haven](#).
- Have [authorization form](#) signed by department faculty or staff.
- Download and sign into the ISOS app.

The [Appendix](#) indicates the tasks required based on level of risk of the APEX site (Low Risk, Medium Risk and High Risk).



**Note:** APEX related travel to high-risk regions is **strongly discouraged**. In rare cases exceptions will be considered based on a thorough internal review by Faculty Advisors and Department Chairs. Certificate Lead approval is also required for Global Health and Public Health and Humanitarian Action (PHHA) students. The review will assess students' prior experience and expertise as well as the capacity of the host agency to manage international students in high-risk situations. The Dean's final approval for student APEX travel to areas designated as high-risk is mandatory.

# Submitting your Scope of Work

The process for submitting and tracking the Scope of Work approval is illustrated in Figure 2.

The SOW can be accessed [here](#). You must complete the form in its entirety before you hit the **“Final Approval”** button on the right top side of the screen. You can also **“Save for later”** and **“Download.pdf”** at the same location on your SOW form.

To submit your completed SOW for advisor and department approval, click on the **“Final Approval”** button. Once you click on **“Final Approval”** your SOW is submitted, and your APEX departmental faculty advisor, as listed in Section A of the form, will receive an email notification regarding your submission. After reviewing your SOW, the faculty advisor may give an online approval or email you with questions or suggestions. During this part of the process, you can make changes on the form as needed. The final approval for your SOW is provided by your Academic Department APEX director or academic coordinator. Once you obtain this level of approval, you are not able to make any further changes.

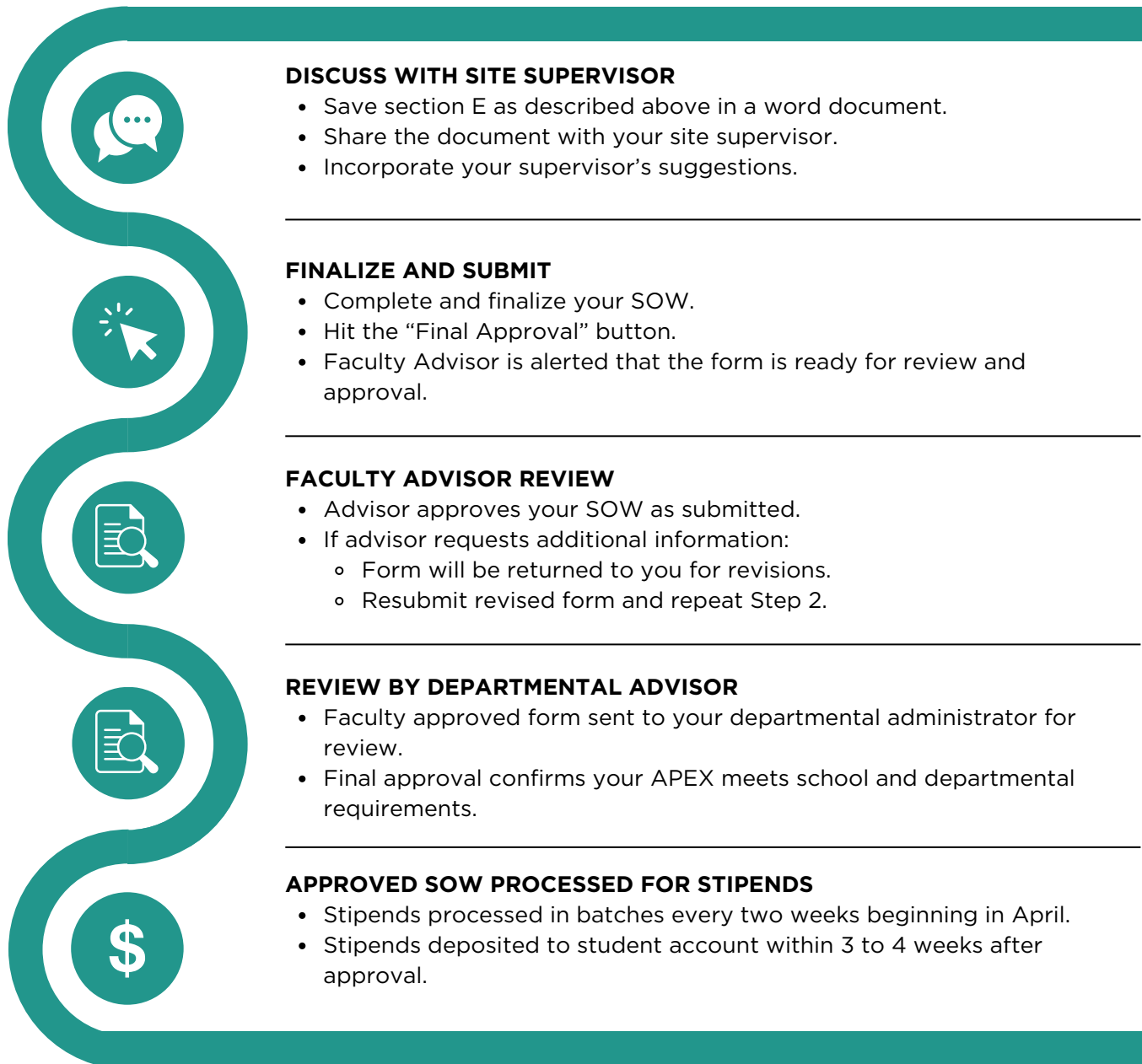
The SOW approval is an automated process, and you do not need to do anything else to receive departmental approval, except if your departmental academic advisor and/or APEX coordinator/director contacts you about changing or improving an aspect of your SOW. You will be able to track the status of all approvals on the SOW database, by logging in [here](#).

This online SOW system reduces paper printouts and enables students to electronically communicate important information to their department and faculty advisor. However, this online system is not meant to replace in-person meetings with advisors, APEX directors, or others. In-person communication between students and faculty remains an essential component of the APEX. Students should consult their Academic Department for expectations related to APEX information sessions and advisory meetings. OFP manages the APEX Tracking Database and supports students, faculty and staff to address any technical issues. Error messages or other questions should be photographed and sent to [ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:ofp@cumc.columbia.edu).

Additional tips and troubleshooting for completing the SOW can be found in the [Appendix](#).



**FIGURE 2** Scope of Work process



**FIGURE 3** Scope of Work approval process

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Can I complete two different APEXes?**

Students must fulfill their requirement with one robust experience. OFP and Departments strongly encourage students to have a single APEX. There are some exceptions that can be accommodated on the APEX Tracking Database such as students completing a 6 month Global Health APEX requirement.

## **Can I submit my SOW before speaking with my site supervisor?**

You must discuss your Scope of Work with your site supervisor before you submit it for faculty approval. This ensures that you and your supervisor agree to your tasks and work deliverables. While the delivery and tasks may change during your APEX, this initial discussion in preparation for completing and submitting your Scope of Work, helps to establish a mutual understanding and often helps to facilitate a more productive APEX.

## **Where can I get help for submitting my SOW?**

If you have general questions regarding the electronic submission of your Scope of Work onto the school wide tracking system, please consult the OFP canvas site for further information. For direct inquiries on specific technical problems, please contact the Office of Field Practice at [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu).

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## Step III: APEx Engagement



# Roles and Responsibilities



## SITE SUPERVISORS

APEx site supervisors play an important role in the success of an APEx. Suggested roles and responsibilities during and after an APEx include:

### DURING APEx

- Provide student orientation and identification of activities and resources.
- Discuss and develop student schedules.
- Clarify primary and secondary reporting lines.
- Meet regularly to assess the student's productivity, development and provide support.
- Invite students to meetings, workshops or conferences.
- Contact the departmental APEx coordinator with questions or concerns as needed.

### POST-APEx

- Ensure timely completion of student deliverables.
- Obtain contact information.
- Discuss limitations in the sharing and/or dissemination of materials produced.
- Assess student performance highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.
- Complete online evaluation.
- Participate in Mailman post APEx events.



## STUDENTS

In collaboration with their faculty and/or departmental advisors and site supervisors, students are required to fulfill the following roles and responsibilities during and after their APEx:

### DURING APEx

- Clarify the nature of the working relationship.
- Understand the work culture and environment.
- Clarify primary and secondary reporting lines.
- Discuss time management and reporting requirements.
- Comply with time commitments.
- Meet regularly with the site supervisor to determine progress and refine projects as needed.
- Document activities (data collection, meeting minutes, etc.) in E-portfolio if applicable.
- Complete required training(s).
- Complete and submit all agreed upon deliverables and materials.
- Act in a professional manner regarding attendance, absences, and project deadlines.

### POST-APEx

- Submit deliverables to the site.
- Participate in departmental APEx events.
- Submit APEx completion form.

# Phase I: Getting Oriented

The first few weeks of your APEx is a time to become familiar with the environment and culture of your host agency, get to know your colleagues and/or community, and obtain a deeper understanding of the goals objectives and challenges of your assigned project (s). Here are some suggestions you might find useful during this initial orientation period.

- Continue to learn about the site and your project. Explore opportunities for additional exposure and training.
- Be flexible with both your project timeline as well as your proposed deliverables as the required tasks. Be open to learning about additional projects or ways you can contribute which might have changed since submitting your Scope of Work.
- With reference to your proposed final deliverables, break down the tasks into small components and products. Discuss with your supervisor and revise, if necessary, your timeline of activities.
- It is important to ask for clarification as your projects and deliverables evolve. Continue to refine your understanding of the project and deliverables as more information is provided.
- Discuss your proposed activities as well as any ongoing concerns with your supervisor.
- Establish a clear supervision schedule. Supervision can be provided in a small group, as a check-in or as a formal meeting.
- Document your work as soon as you begin your APEx. However, be sure to be sensitive to the organization's policy for taking pictures/videotaping or using any materials that may be considered proprietary. Follow the organization's guidance and policies on documentation.



# Phase II: Settling In

## **PROBLEM SOLVING AND SUPPORT FOR YOUR APEx**

Maintaining a professional, culturally sensitive, and engaged perspective throughout your APEx is critical to your success. To reduce the chances of small problems snowballing into more complex concerns it is important to reach out for support as soon as possible. When problems, challenges or concerns arise during your Apex, your site supervisor is your primary point of contact. It is also important to maintain contact and seek support from your Academic Department as well, and request assistance you may need to successfully complete your APEx. The Office of Field Practice is also eager to support to you, your Academic Department, and often your APEx site.

## **TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF**

It is normal to at times feel isolated or overwhelmed during your APEx especially when you are working on challenging issues such as health disparities, scarcity of resources, and organizational power dynamics. There are many opportunities to connect with your department and other student-facing offices, as well as with [Student Health on Haven](#) If your APEx is outside of the NYC/tri-state area, there are always remote alternatives to connect with available services.

## **HELPFUL TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR APEx**

- Actively engage in all activities opportunities and contribute by sharing creative ideas and materials from classes and prior experience.
- Document your experience using a range of different modalities.
- Keep your deliverables on schedule and break down large projects into smaller elements.
- Seek out supervision to clarify issues and review work to date.
- Take part in seminars, meetings, and other site-related activities.
- Participate in departmental or OFP check-in, and seminars.
- Learn about the culture of your host agency as well as the community served. Participate in events and activities outside of regular hours as possible.

Remember you are representing Mailman School of Public Health the University through your APEx. It is important to maintain the [honor code and professional guidelines](#).

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## Phase III: Completing your APEx

In the final weeks of your APEx, discuss the status of your project deliverables with your supervisor and your project team. It is recommended that you offer to make a final presentation based on your deliverables to site staff and supervisor. It is also important to schedule a final exit meeting with your site supervisor. This provides an opportunity to receive any important qualitative feedback on your performance and clarify any school/department-related requirements and deliverables. Ensure that your supervisor and host agency is aware of and agrees to the use of APEx deliverables in departmental APEx follow up activities and presentations.

Be sure to leave your personal contact information with your site supervisor and, if interested, express your willingness to continue to stay in contact. This is an important opportunity to build and enhance your professional network.



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# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Who has ownership of the APEX deliverables/products?**

The goal of the APEX is to apply your classroom skills to address the specific needs of your APEX site. It is an academic requirement for all students attending an accredited program. It is an opportunity for you to provide expertise and bring a skill set that needed, in a timely manner, by your APEX site. The APEX site is responsible for identifying the deliverables needed and developed during your APEX and are owned by the site. In many instances the agency will give credit for your contribution to the materials produced during your APEX.

## **Can I travel to a high-risk designated area for my APEX?**

APEX related travel to high-risk regions is strongly discouraged. In rare cases, exceptions will be considered based on a thorough internal review by Faculty Advisors and Department Chairs. The review will assess students' prior experience and expertise, as well as the capacity of the host agency to manage international students in high-risk situations. The Dean's approval for student APEX travel to areas designated as high-risk is **mandatory**.

## **Can I travel to new high-risk areas that have not been approved during my International APEX?**

No, students cannot travel to any new high risk areas that were not reviewed and assessed by Global Travel and the Dean's Office prior to departure for your APEX. Please contact [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu) with travel related questions and concerns.

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## Step IV: Post APEx Requirements and Departmental Activities



# The APEX Completion Form

After completing your APEX, you will receive a link to the APEX Completion Form (ACF). A copy of the ACF can be found in the [Appendix](#). Linked to your previously submitted SOW, this is the final step in the school-wide Mailman APEX management process. In completing the form, you will be asked to describe your role and responsibilities during your APEX. In addition, you will upload at least two practice-based products that reflect at least three foundational and two departmental competencies acquired throughout your APEX. Once the form is submitted, your faculty advisor/academic coordinator will be notified and asked to complete an APEX competency-based assessment form. The [Appendix](#) provides additional guidance for completing and submitting your ACF.

# The Faculty Assessment Form

Once you submit your ACF, your faculty advisor will receive an email notification from [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu) with a link to the Faculty Assessment Form (FAF). A copy of the FAF can be found in the [Appendix](#). In compliance with CEPH requirements, your advisor will review the practice-based materials uploaded on your ACF to ensure they demonstrate progress towards your selected public health foundational and departmental competencies. Your self-selected APEX competencies are highlighted on the FAF.

Your advisor may occasionally have questions or request additional documentation to properly assess the competencies acquisition. In this case, you will be able to open and make the required changes to your APEX Completion Form. Once you have addressed the questions raised by your faculty reviewer, you can resubmit your ACF. Your revised ACF will then be reviewed, approved, and resubmitted by your faculty advisor. You will receive an email notification when the process is complete, and your APEX has been approved.

The completion and submission of the FAF is the final step in the online, school-wide APEX management process. The Mailman Student Academic Records and Standards (STARS) Office will use the data collected from the FAF to verify the graduation requirement checklist.

# Post-APEX Departmental Requirements

Each department requires specific activities to be completed following the completion of the APEX. Please consult your departmental faculty advisor and or practicum director/coordinator to confirm these requirements. Table 9 includes information on departmental/certificate post-APEX requirements

DEPARTMENT / CERTIFICATE	POST APEX REQUIREMENTS
<a href="#">General Public Health</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-Portfolio</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Biostatistics</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5-8-page APEX report</li> <li>APEX presentation</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Environmental Health Sciences</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APEX presentation to the EHS community</li> <li>Final deliverable varies based on the requirements of the APEX sponsor / organization</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Epidemiology</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submission of an abstract</li> <li>Submission of a poster</li> <li>Oral or poster presentation at the Epidemiology Masters Student Day</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Health Policy and Management</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Summary</li> <li>PowerPoint presentation during Fall APEX Day Presentation at APEX Forum</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Population and Family Health</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required abstract</li> <li>Participation in a Fall presentation session</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Sociomedical Sciences</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the SMS APEX Summary Report at the conclusion of your APEX</li> <li>When applicable- submit sample(s) of any products you helped develop</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Global Health Certificate</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A TED-talk style presentation summarizing your APEX.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">PHHA Certificate</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An APEX presentation delivered to PHHA students and faculty during the required APEX class.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 9** Departmental / certificate post-APEX requirements



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Can I use my APEX for my Integrative Learning Experience (ILE)?**

Each department has specific requirements for acceptable formats for the Integrative Learning Experience (ILE). This ranges from a critical assessment and analysis of the APEX experience to a publishable manuscript on a subject/issue, programmatic approach or evaluation strategies emerging from your APEX. Students should consult their Faculty Advisor and/or Departmental Coordinator for specific ILE options.

## **Can I continue to be engaged at my APEX site after completing my APEX?**

Yes, many students continue to be involved with their APEX site and supervisor. Students are often interested in continuing with the work of their APEX site even though the required APEX time requirements and deliverables have been completed. This provides many students with additional work experience and allows them to further develop their personal networks.



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# A Final Note from Office of Field Practice

The Field Practice team is eager to support you through your APEX experience and other practice-based activities such as service learning, community engagement, and interprofessional education. We hope this resource guide has given you all the information you need to identify and complete a rewarding and fulfilling APEX. The OFP team is committed to supporting you to achieve the skills and competencies needed in your public health career.



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# Appendices



# Appendix 1: Past APEx Sites & Student Projects

<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Preventing Lead poisoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a knowledge, attitude and behavior questionnaire (supplemented by in-depth interviews) on factory based lead exposure.</li> <li>• Develop and implement training program for factory owners and employees on lead poisoning prevention.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A report of the results of the interventions to be submitted to the Health Committee of the institution.</li> <li>• Education curriculum about the prevention of lead poisoning.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced Spanish (oral and written).</li> <li>• Basic knowledge of lead poisoning prevention programs.</li> <li>• Community education and data analysis skills.</li> <li>• Ability to work as part of a team and with the community.</li> </ul>
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>CANCER INSTITUTE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (IHOP)</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Cancer Patients in Need of Palliative Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a review of the recent literature defining “palliative care” programs in Latin America.</li> <li>• Review existing services and gaps in program elements identify needs in designing a new palliative care service including educational, training, assistance, etc.).</li> <li>• Identify structural and functional characteristics of the unit and provide a program plan.</li> <li>• Develop a communication strategy and materials for patients and staff.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Report and presentation.</li> <li>• Patient brochures providing resources and information on available services.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to work well on a team.</li> <li>• Proficiency in Microsoft Office applications.</li> <li>• Intermediate knowledge of Spanish.</li> <li>• Knowledge of program planning and research</li> <li>• Interest in cancer patients and palliative care.</li> </ul>
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>PUBLIC HOSPITAL</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Assessment of high- risk patients' follow up services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of qualitative methods to explore barriers to effective post-discharge continuity of care for high risk/under-insured patients.</li> <li>• Propose strategies to improve continuity of care services.</li> <li>• Home and Health Units visits to assess and implement recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	Assessment report with specific recommendations to improve home care for discharged high-risk patients.
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis skills.</li> <li>• Some familiarity with chronic disease epi (cardio-cerebral-vascular, respiratory neoplastic and metabolic).</li> <li>• Some knowledge or experience in patient safety and quality service improvement programs.</li> </ul>

<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY FOOD COUNCIL</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Pathways for Achieving Community Food Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops pathways to achieve food justice and create opportunities for residents to identify and determine solutions.</li> <li>• Activities include increasing (a) public land designated for food gardening, (b) availability of affordable and healthy food and (c) community.</li> <li>• Awareness, knowledge, and self-efficacy related to urban gardening, nutrition/healthy eating, and food justice issues affecting their community.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant proposal for an existing program.</li> <li>• Program evaluation assessing the impact of existing programs; survey/surveillance tools.</li> <li>• Promotional materials for upcoming events.</li> <li>• Community engagement and service provision.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiar with managing Facebook and Instagram accounts.</li> <li>• Comfortable working with Google Drive, Gmail, Word, Excel, Canva.</li> <li>• Attention to detail and experience with event coordination and promotion.</li> </ul>

<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>HIV CLINIC</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Depression among Persons Living with AIDS: Screening Tool</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conjunction with the clinical team, implement a depression screening tool to be used by clinic physicians for HIV-positive clients.</li> <li>• Student will design a training workshop on tool usage and referral process.</li> <li>• Analyze screening data and propose recommendations for further usage.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final presentation.</li> <li>• Summary report and recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of mental health and patient screening procedures.</li> <li>• Survey design and SPSS data analysis.</li> </ul>

<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH / BUREAU OF NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Network Map Analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct a series of network maps to understand existing partnerships and assess current gaps to inform future partnerships.</li> <li>• Two network maps are required: measure of the strength of partnership among coalition members and use qualitative data to assess the strength of the bureau's partners.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of survey tool and interview script.</li> <li>• Excel data tables and analysis.</li> <li>• Two visual network maps.</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentation and final report.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiar with excel.</li> <li>• Strong qualitative and quantitative data analysis.</li> <li>• Ability to conduct stakeholder interviews.</li> <li>• Creativity and application of graphic design software.</li> <li>• Strong written and verbal communication skills.</li> </ul>

<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>NATIONAL CENTER FOR DISASTER PREVENTION</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Social Media for Disaster Prevention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist project manager and instructional designer to use social media to promote NCDP work and projects.</li> <li>• Compose marketing and promotional materials and branded items.</li> <li>• Research competitor marketing and communications.</li> <li>• Assist with event materials and preparation.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed promotional materials including brochures, flyers, and email blasts.</li> <li>• Analysis of market competition.</li> <li>• Strategic marketing plan.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong writing and oral communication skills.</li> <li>• Knowledge of communication and marketing strategies.</li> <li>• Experience using social media tools.</li> <li>• Some knowledge of public health or disaster preparedness.</li> </ul>
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY BASED NUTRITION PROGRAM</b>
<b>PROJECT ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>Nutrition Needs Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement a community-based participatory research project to understand dietary and exercise habits, nutritional awareness, and perception of barriers to providing or consuming healthy food.</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERABLE(S):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report analyzing the structural accessibility of healthy food, diet, and exercise habits of a sample of residents and businesses.</li> <li>• Propose hypotheses on the sources of diet-related illness.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong communication skills and ability to engage with a diverse population.</li> <li>• Epidemiology and/or collecting empirical and secondary source information.</li> <li>• Excellent written communication skills.</li> <li>• Experience in survey design and interview techniques.</li> </ul>

---

## Appendix 2A: Scope of Work (SOW)

### Section A: Student Information

UNI:

First Name / Last Name:

Department:

Degree:

Certificate:

Student Cell Phone:

APEX Faculty Advisor:

### Section B: APEX Information

**Information about your host organization is requested in this section. Provide the location information about where you will be doing your APEX. If you are working remotely provide the host organization's headquarters location.**

APEX Position:

Organization Name:

Organization Type:

City / State / Postal Code:

Country:

Website URL: (enter NONE if not available)

Location / Category:

Will your APEX be in-person, hybride or remote?

Do you need a visa related work approval to work in your host country?

Do you need a tourist visa to enter your APEX Country?

What is the ISOS risk level for your APEX city or town?

What is the ISOS risk level for your APEX country?

Proposed Time Commitment: \_\_\_\_ Hours / Week

Planned APEX Start Date:

Planned APEX Finish Date:

Primary APEX Period:

Does your APEX provide compensation?

How did you obtain your APEX? (select all that apply)

- Office of Field Practice APEX site
- Department APEX site
- Certificate APEX site
- Office of Career Services
- Personal Networks
- Recruited by Mailman Faculty

### Section C: Site Supervisor Information

**Provide the details on your specific site supervisor.**

Supervisor Name:

Title:

Supervisor Email Address:

How often will you have evaluations or check-in meetings with your site supervisor?

### Section D: IRB-Related Questions and IRB Status

**All students conducting human subject research must determine if IRB approval is needed. You must review the IRB section of the APEX resource guide (located on the Field Practice Canvas site) before completing the questions below.**

Columbia University IRB approval required?

If “No”, name of Faculty Advisor:

Columbia University IRB Status:

Columbia University IRB # (if not received, enter “None”):

### Section E: Project Description

**Describe the APEX project and highlight your specific roles and responsibilities. This section must be discussed with and approved by your site supervisor before you submit this form.**

**APEX Purpose:**

What is the overall goal of this APEX? (Maximum 1800 characters)

**Background/Context:**

Describe the (a) mission of your site/agency and how it relates to public health, and (b) the anticipated contribution of your APEX to the organization. (Maximum 1800 characters)

**APEX Plan:**

Describe your role, responsibilities, and related activities towards the project goal. (Maximum 1800 characters)

**Methods:**

Briefly describe the tools and methods you plan to use to achieve your APEX goals. (Maximum 1800 characters)



**Deliverables/Products Planned:**

Please describe the specific deliverables/products you plan to develop and submit to your host organization during your APEX. (Maximum 1800 characters)

**Timeline:**

Please outline a proposed timeline for achieving your overall goals. (Maximum 1800 characters)

**Resources Needed:**

Identify additional resources you will need to complete your APEX (i.e., translators, transportation, software, a work space, etc.) (Maximum 1800 characters)

**Challenges:**

Describe any anticipated challenges and steps you plan to take to address them. (Maximum 1800 characters)

**Deliverable Required by Your Department:**

Based on APEX information provided by your department, please state what deliverables/products you expect to submit to your department after the conclusion of your APEX. (Maximum 1800 characters)

**Section F: Learning Contract**

*Note: This section includes a list of foundational competencies by the Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH), and a list of departmental competencies from the Mailman School of Public Health (MSPH).*

*Students are instructed to (a) select a minimum of 3 foundational competencies from the CEPH, and describe how they relate to their APEX; and (b) select a minimum of 2 competencies from the MSPH departmental competencies, and to describe how they plan to apply / practice them during their APEX.*

*Please refer to Appendix 4 for a list of foundational competencies by CEPH, and Appendix 5 for a list of MSPH departmental competencies.*

**Host Institution / Agency Approval**

Understanding that I am bound by the Mailman honor code, I certify that I have discussed the APEX proposed in the scope of work with a supervisor at the host institution/agency, and that my plan is approved by the site supervisor.

## Appendix 2B: APEX Completion Form (ACF)

UNI: \_\_\_\_\_ Planned Start Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Planned Finish Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note: This form is used for Mailman School purposes only. It will not be shared with your agency/placement supervisor.*

### Section I: APEX Information

During which semester and year did you complete your APEX? Semester: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

What was your start date? \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

What was your end date? \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

What is your anticipated date of graduation? Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency / organization: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor / preceptor: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you obtain IRB approval from Columbia University (CU) or the New York State Psychiatric Institute (NYSPI) for your APEX?

Did you receive any funding or compensation for your APEX in addition to the stipend provided by Mailman? As a reminder, the Mailman stipend ranged from \$250-\$2000 depending on the location and length of your APEX, and was issued following approval of your SOW.

From where did you receive additional funding for your APEX? (Check all that apply)

- I received funding from my APEX site.
- I received funding from my department
- I received funding from a Mailman scholarship or fellowship
- I received funding Non-Mailman scholarship, fellowship, or grant
- Other - Please explain:

---

How much compensation did you receive for your APEX in addition to the stipend provided by Mailman? As a reminder, the Mailman stipend ranged from \$250-\$2000 depending on the location and length of your APEX, and was issued following approval of your SOW.

Are you still engaged with your APEX site?

Are you receiving any funding or compensation for your ongoing involvement with your APEX site?

## Section II: APEX Practice-based Products and Competency Assessment

What is the overall goal of your APEX project? (1000 characters maximum)

Please describe your primary activities towards the project goal (1000 characters maximum)

Please upload two APEX practice-based products you developed for your APEX site. (Acceptable file types: .docx, .xlsx, .pptx, .pdf). These products are distinct from any deliverable required by your department. If the practice-based products you developed are proprietary, please contact your departmental APEX director or advisor to discuss alternatives. Please provide detail on your contribution to this project. (Include whether you developed it exclusively on your own, or if the product was developed by additional people, what was your contribution to it).

Product 1 (Required)

Product 2 (Required)

Product 3 (Optional)

### Foundational Competencies by the Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH)

Please select and briefly describe at least 3 competencies that you applied/practiced in developing the submitted practice-based products.

*Note: This question includes a list of foundational competencies by the Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH). Students are instructed to select a minimum of 3 foundational competencies from the CEPH, and describe how each was achieved during their APEX. Please refer to Appendix 4 for a list of foundational competencies by CEPH.*

### Departmental Competencies

Please select and briefly describe at least 2 competencies that you applied/practiced in developing the submitted practice-based products.

*Note: This question includes a list of departmental competencies from the Mailman School of Public Health (MSPH). Students are instructed to select a minimum of 2 departmental competencies from the list, and describe how each was achieved during their APEX. Please refer to Appendix 5 for a list of departmental competencies by MSPH.*

## Section III: Post-APEX Reflection

Did the APEX meet your expectations?

How satisfied were you with your on-site supervision?

How satisfied were you with your activities/tasks/assignments?

Did your APEX build upon your existing skills?

Did your APEX enable you to build new skills?

Based on your experience, are you interested in continuing similar work?

How often did you meet with your site supervisor or preceptor?

---

During your APEX, did you communicate with your departmental APEX and/or faculty advisor?

Would you recommend that a student be placed at your APEX site next year?

Are you using your engagement for your thesis or capstone?

Additional comments (optional)  
(1000 characters maximum)

### **Certification**

I understand that I am bound by the Mailman honor code.

By typing my name in the box below, I certify that all of the information submitted above is true and accurate.

Enter your name to certify:

## Appendix 2C: Faculty Assessment Form (ACF)

UNI:

Department:

First Name:

Certificate:

Last Name:

Faculty Reviewer:

CEPH requires all students to submit for review a minimum of 2 practice-based products developed during their APEx. (See examples of practice-based products here.) The products should demonstrate a student's application of CEPH and departmental competencies in an applied non-classroom-based setting.

This form includes the student's (a) APEx project summary and the student's contribution to the APEx project goal, (b) at least 2 practice-based products, and (c) Faculty APEx Competency Assessment.

Based on your review of the practice-based products submitted, please select at least 3 Foundational and 2 Departmental Competencies the student applied or practiced. If the products do not demonstrate application of a total of 5 competencies, please indicate the additional information required in the box at the end of the form.

### APEx Information

APEx organization name:

Overall APEx project goal:

Student activities toward project goal:

### Practice-based Products

Product 1 (Required)

Product 2 (Required)

Product 3 (Optional)

### CEPH and Departmental Competency Assessment

After reviewing the student's products, please select at least 3 CEPH Foundational and 2 Departmental competencies the student applied or practiced. The student's self-selected competences applied/practiced are highlighted below. Your assessment may or may not align with the student's.

*Note: Please refer to Appendix 4 and 5 for a list of foundational competencies by CEPH and departmental competencies by MSPH respectively.*

### Summary

Student's APEx work products submitted demonstrate application of at least 3 CEPH Foundational Competencies and 2 Departmental Competencies.

- Yes
- No

Summary of the APEx products submitted (required):

## Appendix 3: Submitting the ACF

Once you finalize your APEX you must complete and submit the required online APEX Completion and Evaluation Form (ACF) through the APEX Tracking Database. The ACF is linked to your previously submitted Scope of Work. It serves as the basis for the final step in requirements, which is the faculty competency assessment form (FAF). This form is completed by your departmental faculty advisor / APEX Director.

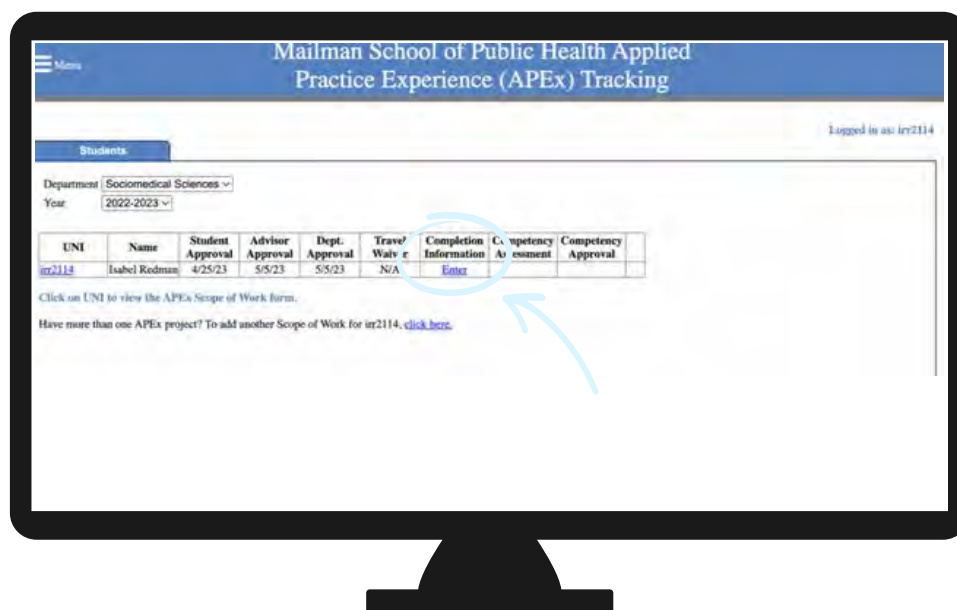
In completing the ACF, you will be asked to upload at least two practice-based products that reflect foundational and departmental competencies acquired throughout your APEX.

Once the form is submitted, your departmental advisor / APEX Director will be notified automatically and asked to complete an APEX Faculty Assessment Form (FAF). This assessment will confirm the successful completion of your APEX.

01

Access the form: <https://www.sac-cu.org/MSPH/PracTrac/Home.aspx>

- Select “**Enter**” under the “**Completion Information**” column.



02

In completing the form please note:

- Some basic information has been entered automatically from your Scope of Work. Gray or “N/A” fields indicate that the information on your Scope of Work has not changed.
- Please complete all the areas of the form requesting new information and clearly document any important APEX changes (i.e., changes in supervisor, location, or assignment).
- Complete ALL open fields and indicate “N/A” for non-applicable open responses.

The screenshot shows a web-based form titled "APEX Completion" for the Mailman School of Public Health. At the top, there are buttons for "Download Job", "Return to User", and "Submit". Below the title, there are input fields for "User" (with a dropdown menu), "Department" (with a dropdown menu), "Planned Start Date" (10/11/2022), "First Name" (John), and "Last Name" (Doherty). A note below these fields states: "Please Note: This form is used for Mailman School purposes only; it will not be shared with your agency placement supervisor." The main section is "Section 3: APEX Information", which includes questions about the user's current position, start and end dates, anticipated graduation date, agency organization, and supervisor information. There are also checkboxes for receiving approval from Columbia University or the State of Maryland, and for receiving funding or compensation. The bottom section is "Section 6: APEX Practice-based Products and Competency Assessment", with a question about the overall goal of the APEX contact.

03

Upload a minimum of two practice-based products.

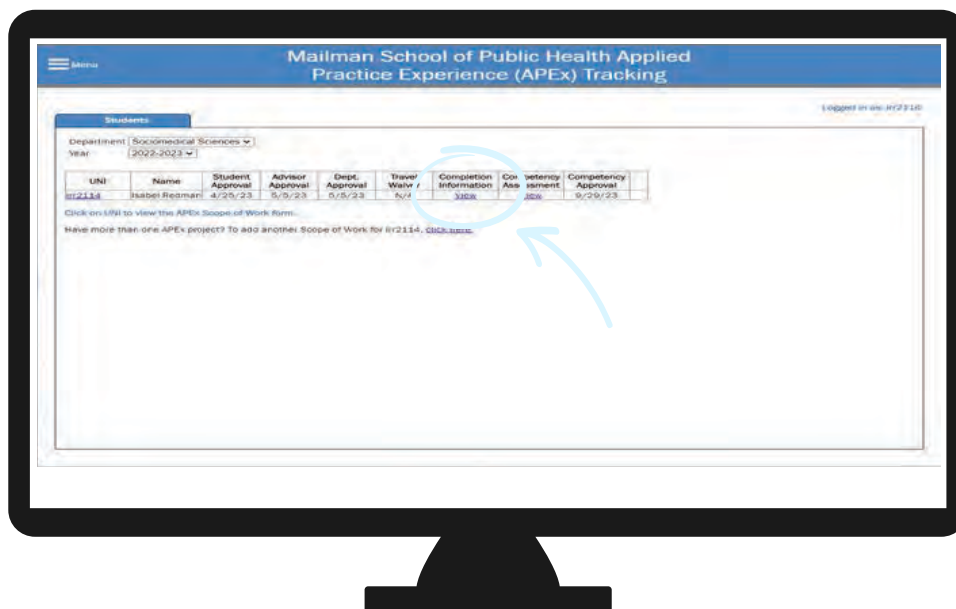
- Acceptable file formats include PDF, Word, Excel, Power Point, and jpeg.
- Examples of practice-based products are listed below.
- Do not include datasets, confidential, or proprietary information.
- Always consult with your site supervisor on appropriate products you can share with school.



04

Once you complete the form, approve it for submission.

- The Completion Information Column will change to “**View**”.
- Your departmental advisor / APEX Director will be alerted and will be able to complete the APEX Faculty Assessment Form.



05

You will be notified by email when your the departmental advisor / APEX Director completes and submits the assessment form.

- To view the assessment, click “**View**” under “**Faculty Form**”.
- The “**Approval Date**” appears when all APEX requirements have been fulfilled.
- If your the departmental advisor / APEX Director requires additional information to assess the required competencies, they will submit their form without approving it.
  - This will trigger an email to you with comments on the changes and additions they will need you to do in your review.
  - Your form will reopen so that you can make the necessary changes.

06

The Field Practice team is available to address any questions or concerns in completing and submitting your ACF.

- Contact [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu)
- Indicate “**ACF Question**” in the subject line.
- For technical problems, please attach a screenshot of the problem.

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## Appendix 4: CEPH Foundational Competencies

### Evidence-based approaches to public health

- 1 Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice
- 2 Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context
- 3 Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate
- 4 Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice

### Public Health & Health Care Systems

- 5 Compare the organization, structure, and function of health systems across national and international settings
- 6 Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities, and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity

### Planning & Management to Promote Health

- 7 Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health
- 8 Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs
- 9 Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention
- 10 Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management, specifically after funding for a project is secured
- 11 Select methods to evaluate public health programs

### Policy in Public Health

- 12 Discuss the policy-making process
- 13 Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes
- 14 Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations
- 15 Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity

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**Leadership**

- 16** Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue; such principles may include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration, and guiding decision making
- 17** Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges

**Communication**

- 18** Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
- 19** Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
- 20** Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content

**Interprofessional and/or Intersectoral Practice**

- 21** Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health

**Systems Thinking**

- 22** Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative

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## Appendix 5: Departmental Competencies

### Biostatistics

- 1 Apply descriptive techniques commonly used to summarize public health data.
- 2 Apply common statistical methods for inference.
- 3 Apply descriptive and inferential methodologies according to the type of study design for answering a particular research question.
- 4 Interpret results of statistical analyses found in public health studies
- 5 Develop written and oral presentations based on statistical analyses for both public health professionals and educated lay audiences.

### Environmental Health Sciences

- 1 Critically evaluate the current literature in environmental health sciences including identifying gaps and uncertainties in the knowledge base and in the methodological approaches to solving environmental health problems.
- 2 Evaluate the risk of environmental exposures to human populations through the incorporation of exposure, toxicologic and other relevant data into risk assessment methodology, including hazard identification, exposure assessment, dose-response evaluation, and risk characterization.
- 3 Propose approaches for assessing, preventing, and controlling hazards that pose risks to human health and safety.
- 4 Communicate effectively in writing and orally a knowledge of environmental hazards to other professionals and the public, including effective risk communication.
- 5 Recommend appropriate interventions to control environmental risks and evaluate environmental control programs to relevant decision-makers.

### Epidemiology

- 1 Appraise epidemiological literature critically in a defined problem area using advanced bibliographic and informatics resources for purposes of evaluation, summary, and translation.
  - 2 Analyze public health problems in terms of magnitude; person, time, and place; and the distribution and determinants of both chronic and infectious diseases; and principles of disease prevention in different populations.
  - 3 Select among common epidemiologic study designs (including ecologic, cross-sectional, cohort, and case-control) and explain their uses for solving epidemiological problems based on study goals and key sources of available data.
  - 4 Apply appropriate epidemiologic and statistical measures to generate, calculate, and draw valid inferences from public health data
  - 5 Apply the foundational ethical and legal principles pertaining to the collection, maintenance, analysis, and dissemination of epidemiologic and public health information when analyzing public health data.
-

**General Public Health**

- 1 Interpret research results for quality improvement projects in patient-centered, community-based, and national healthcare settings to inform program and in program and intervention design.
- 2 Coordinate the organization, management, and development of interdisciplinary teams in clinical, research and other specific areas of professional expertise.
- 3 Employ the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior in clinical and research environments inclusive of investigating resources and requesting advice when needed.
- 4 Propose strategies to mitigate social inequities in healthcare systems.
- 5 Formulate innovative and effective communication strategies, including digital ones, that recognize patterns of resistance, counteract disinformation campaigns, and reach marginalized populations in low, middle and high-income countries.

**Health Policy and Management**

- 1 Assess issues related to healthcare quality, access, cost, and equity using economic methods, organizational theory, and policy analysis.
- 2 Evaluate the fiscal performance and sustainability of an organization using financial analysis and accounting and budgeting principles.
- 3 Apply economic concepts and theories to inform health policy development and management decision-making at the microeconomic and macroeconomic level.
- 4 Effectively communicate health policy and management problems in the healthcare system using oral, written, and visual forms.
- 5 Apply fundamental principles of research methods and data management to develop and synthesize research questions in health policy and management.
- 6 Manage projects and report outcomes that advance an organization’s mission while continuing to develop professional responsibility and self-awareness.

**Population and Family Health**

- 1 Advocate for ethics, social justice and human-rights principles surrounding long-term, action-oriented public health research, policies, and programs.
- 2 Engage with diverse communities, with attention to privilege and power dynamics, and to human resource assets and constraints in diverse locations and contexts.
- 3 Design and synthesize methodologically-sound, evidence-based research to improve both public health practice and policy in the main substantive areas of the Department.
- 4 Implement data collection strategies and instruments to guide program development and monitoring and evaluation strategies for use in a broad range of local and global contexts, particularly in resource-constrained settings.
- 5 Propose viable, effective, and context-specific programs in the primary substantive areas of the department and articulate the location of these programs within public health systems and local contexts.

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**Sociomedical Sciences**

- 1** Apply concepts, theories, and methods from the social and behavioral sciences to address public health challenges through program and policy development.
- 2** Employ relevant quantitative research methodologies and assess reliability and validity of measures used in quantitative research to study theory-driven research questions.
- 3** Identify, collect and analyze qualitative data through methods including in-depth interviews, focus groups, ethnography, and participant observation.
- 4** Communicate research and program findings through action-oriented recommendations that are appropriate for varied audiences and sectors.
- 5** Employ ethical and culturally competent frameworks in research design and conduct.

## Appendix 6: IRB Decision Aid

This decision aid on page 52 will assist you in determining if your APEX includes human subjects research and requires CU IRB approval. Please confer with your faculty advisor as you work through this tool.

The Office of Field Practice provides the following resources to guide you through the process of determining whether you need CU IRB approval:

- Office hours dedicated to IRB questions every alternate Thursday from 11:30 am - 12:50 pm. Consult the Canvas site for exact dates.
- A live Field Practice Tuesday Talk addressing IRB considerations and processes. Consult the Canvas site for the exact date.
- A [recorded lecture](#) addressing IRB considerations and processes.
- [Detailed guidance](#) on how to determine if you need CU IRB approval and complete Section E of your SOW.
- [Case studies](#) demonstrating the IRB determination process for common APEX.
- [Examples of prior IRB submissions](#) (only for those who need to obtain CU IRB approval).
- Step-by-step instructions for preparing an IRB submission if you are seeking CU IRB approval to analyze data with personal health information.
- Columbia University's [Students as Researchers policy](#).



Will you be involved in research, i.e., does your APEX involve both a systematic investigation and contribute to generalizable knowledge?

**Systematic investigation:** Activity with a predetermined plan with data collection (quantitative or qualitative) and/or data analysis

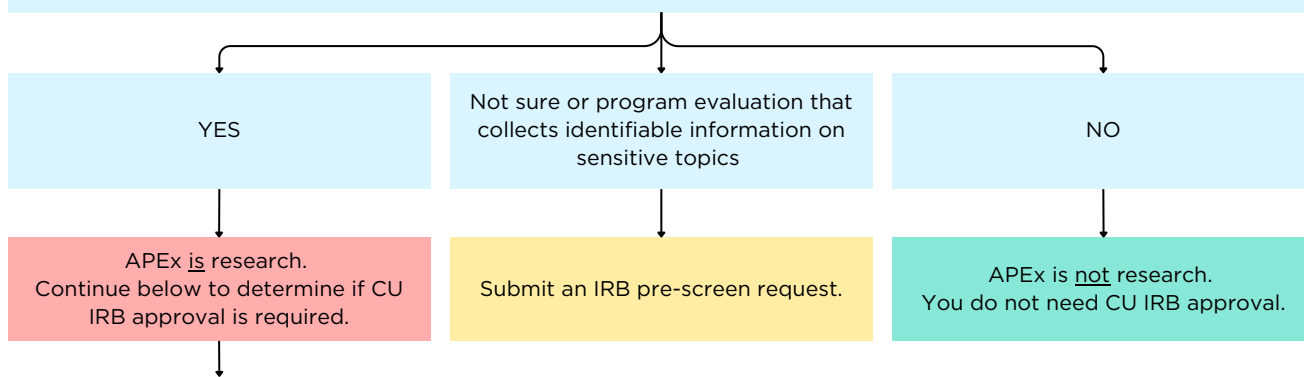
**Generalizable knowledge:** Inform policy or apply findings outside a program or organization.

Activities that are research: if done with the intent of producing generalizable knowledge:

- Conducting quantitative interviews (quantitative or qualitative) or focus groups, or implementing surveys
- Participating in study implementation e.g., recruitment, taking informed consent
- Data abstraction
- Data analysis
- Literature review

Activities that are research: if done with the intent of producing generalizable knowledge:

- Conducting quantitative interviews (quantitative or qualitative) or focus groups, or implementing surveys
- Participating in study implementation e.g., recruitment, taking informed consent
- Data abstraction
- Data analysis
- Literature review



Does your APEX involve **human subjects**, i.e., a living individual about whom an investigator either obtains and uses information or biospecimens through interaction with the individual, or obtains and uses existing identifiable, private information or biospecimens?

**Interaction:** Interviews (quantitative or qualitative), questionnaires (interviewer administered, self-administered or automated), surveys, observations, physical measurements, or specimen collection with a living individual.

**Identifiable:** Individual-level information that can be used to identify a person, e.g., name, social security number.

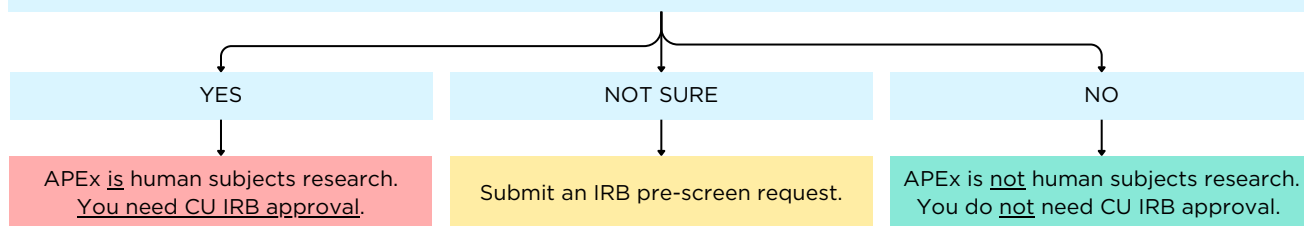
**Private information:** Information about behavior that occurs in a setting in which one expects no observation or recording is taking place, or information that is collected for specific purposes and not expected to be made public (e.g., medical records).

Research activities that do involve human subjects:

- Conducting quantitative interviews (quantitative or qualitative) or focus groups, or implementing surveys
- Participating in study implementation e.g., recruitment, taking informed consent
- Abstraction of data with identifiers
- Analysis of data with identifiers

Research activities that do not involve human subjects:

- Literature reviews
- Analysis of publicly available data
- Analysis of de-identified data



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## Appendix 7: Submitting an APEX for IRB Pre-Screening

Write an email to Dr. Batya Elul at [be2124@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:be2124@cumc.columbia.edu) and to OFP at [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu), following the directions below.

1. Subject Line: "APEX IRB Pre-Screening"

2. Copy your Practicum Faculty Advisor (Biostatistics, Environmental Health, Population and Family Health, Sociomedical Sciences) or departmental APEX director (Epidemiology and Health Policy and Management) on the email.

3. Enter the following in the body of the email:

- Your full name:
- CU email address:
- The full name of your faculty advisor or departmental APEX director:
- Mailman Department:

4. Attach a PDF of your Scope of Work (SOW) that has been reviewed by your faculty advisor or departmental APEX director. Do not submit your SOW in the SOW database but rather save it as a PDF and attach it to the email. The file should be named as:

***UNI\_LastName\_FirstName\_APEX\_SOW.***

5. Attach a Word document that provides answers to the 4 questions below. You must answer all the questions even if the information is already included in your SOW. Where possible, provide more detail than in your SOW. The file should be named as:

***UNI\_LastName\_FirstName\_APEX\_PreScreen.***

a. How will the work from your APEX be utilized?

For example:

- *I expect the data from the interviews that I conduct will be published in a journal or presented at a professional conference.*
- *The analysis I do will be used in a grant proposal.*
- *The data from the observations I conduct will be discussed in a workshop to plan the site's priorities for 2023.*
- *The data I abstract will be used to generate indicators, e.g., proportion of pregnant women who were HIV tested during their first antenatal care visit.*

**Note:** Presentation of work to your site supervisors or in your department are NOT professional presentations or publication.

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b. What is the focus population?

Be as specific as possible, e.g., include information on ages and English-language abilities.

For example:

- *My APEX will focus on male commercial sex workers aged 20-29.*
- *The project is focused on adolescents aged 10-19 with diabetes.*
- *I will work with undocumented immigrant women age 25+ who are living in a shelter.*

c. What topics will be examined?

For example:

- *The dataset I will use has information about injecting drug use, including where study participants buy drugs and if they trade sex for drugs.*
- *Women will be asked if they have ever been sexually assaulted.*
- *HIV-infected men who have sex with men will discuss why they do not always take their HIV medication.*

c. Will you collect, abstract, see or use identifying information on the focus population? If so, what specific elements?

You must look at the list of data elements in the Appendix before answering this question.

For example:

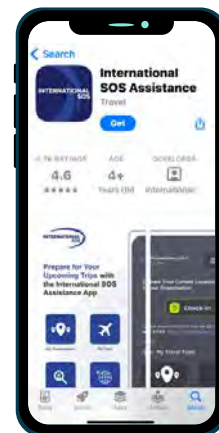
- *The dataset I will use does not include any identifying information.*
- *The questionnaire asks about age, but not dates of birth and doesn't gather any other identifying information.*
- *I will see patients dates of birth, addresses, phone numbers and medical record numbers.*

**Note:** The examples above may not pertain to your APEX. Your answers should be specific to your APEX.

## Appendix 8: International APEX Travel Requirements

International APEX travel is managed jointly by Columbia University Global Travel, OSA and OFF. This Pre-Travel Guidance outlines the process for all Mailman students planning an International APEX. Detailed information can be found on the International APEX Module available on the Field Practice Canvas Site.

All traveling students are required to download the ISOS app. The ISOS app provides updated travel information and can be used to register changes in travel. In case of emergency, the App can be used to contact ISOS for immediate assistance.



### ALL STUDENTS TRAVELING INTERNATIONALLY MUST:

- Identify the [ISOS travel risk ratings](#) and [ISOS elevated evacuation](#) status for the APEX city and country.
- Complete and submit APEX [Scope of Work](#), including the embedded assumption of risk waiver.
- Schedule a [Pre-travel Consultation](#) with [Student Health on Haven](#).
- Have [authorization form](#) signed by department faculty or staff.
- Download and sign into the ISOS app.

Instructions for the risk level of your APEX site are listed below.

INSIGNIFICANT or LOW-RISK

MEDIUM-RISK

HIGH-RISK

**WHEN THE LEVEL OF RISK AT YOUR APEX SITE IS:****INSIGNIFICANT / LOW-RISK**

- Book travel and [register trip itinerary with ISOS](#).

**MEDIUM-RISK**

- Complete and submit an [itinerary review request](#) to ISOS.
- Share itinerary review feedback from ISOS with [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu) with subject "Medium Risk ISOS Review".
- Once a response has been received from ISOS, book travel and [register trip itinerary with ISOS](#).

**HIGH- RISK**

- Complete & submit an [itinerary review request to ISOS](#).
- Complete and submit an [Elevated Travel Risk Approval Form](#) located on the Global Travel website.
- Complete [MSPH High, Extreme, Elevated Evacuation Status Form](#), and submit to [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu) with the heading "Dean's Travel Approval Request".
- Schedule a [Pre-travel Consultation](#) with [Student Health on Haven](#).
- Have [authorization form](#) signed by department faculty or staff.
- Receive Dean's approval.
- Obtain approval in writing from the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences.
- Book travel and [register trip itinerary with ISOS](#).

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## Appendix 9: Troubleshooting the SOW Database

### **Sharing the SOW with advisors and your APEX site**

Your APEX advisor and departmental APEX director/coordinator have online access to your SOW. To share your SOW with the organization where you are doing your APEX, you may download a PDF version of your SOW. Use the “Print form” button to share drafts of the form as often as needed. This will produce a PDF-version of the form, which can then be saved outside the SOW database onto your computer desktop and then shared with others via email

### **Filling out the SOW, saving for later, and submitting**

Students can save a draft of the SOW without submitting it. You can do this as many times as you need by clicking on the “Save for Later” button. The system will time-out after being idle for too long, so please “Save for Later” often. Only click the “submit” button once you have completed your SOW in the best way possible.

### **Copying and pasting APEX information onto the online SOW**

It is strongly suggested that students type their answers to Section E of the SOW in Word or Notepad, so that if there is any problem with the SOW database, their work is saved in another format. If there is trouble copying and pasting, clear formatting, or copy/paste from Notepad or as plain text. This will also assist with counting character limits (Section E has an 1,800-character limit).

### **Error message while working on the online SOW**

If you receive an error message, please copy the message completely or a screenshot of the message and email to Field Practice at [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu).

### **Unable to submit a completed SOW**

You must complete the form in its entirety to submit. Please make sure you have typed an entry into every field (or, where applicable, type N/A), used numerical fields where appropriate and used proper date and time formats.

### **Missing faculty advisor or departmental approval**

First make sure that you have given approval for your SOW. Students sometimes forget to click the “Final Approval” button and instead just save the form. If you haven’t received any approvals or email responses from your faculty advisor or departmental APEX director, please follow up with them. It might take up to two weeks for the faculty advisor and department APEX director / coordinator to review your SOW and provide their approval. The need to wait for various approvals is another reason why you should start this process early.

**Received all approvals for SOW, but IRB submission is under review**

All SOW approvals are pending IRB approval, as applicable. Faculty may approve SOW forms pending IRB, but students cannot begin their research/data collection until IRB status is resolved. However, you may start working on other aspects of the APEX, without interviewing study subjects or working with the data.

**Not receiving APEX stipend after submitting the SOW**

Your SOW must be fully approved and department (academic advisor and/or practicum director/coordinator) before Field Practice can process your stipend. It will take up to three weeks after processing to get the stipend credited to your account or to receive a check. If you have not received your stipend after four weeks of SOW approval, please contact us at [msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:msph-ofp@cumc.columbia.edu). Additional stipend information is provided in this Resource Guide.





For more information, please contact:



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Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health  
722 West 168th Street (ARB), Room 1040B  
New York, NY 10032



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