

THINKING ABOUT YOUR APEX? HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



What is the Applied Practice Experience (APEX)?

The APEX is a required field-based component of a Master of public Health (MPH) program where students apply classroom learning to address domestic and international public health problems. It allows students to demonstrate public health competencies, gain practical skills, build professional networks, and contribute to an organization's goals, projects, and services. The APEX must be planned, supervised, and evaluated.

How can I find an APEX?

There are several ways to find an APEX including departmental and certificate contacts, the Office of Field Practice (OFP) postings, Mailman CareerLink, and your own personal search and networks. Remember Mailman is your network! Make use of your relationships with your professors, faculty 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.

When do I fulfill the APEX requirement?

Most students complete an 8-10-week APEX during the summer months between the first and second year of the MPH. Students start thinking about their interests and exploring possible APEX opportunities during the first semester of the first year. Applying to and finalizing your APEX plan usually takes place between February and May. Students in the GPH, accelerated, and 4+1 MPH programs have alternative timelines.

Where can I do my APEX?

An APEX may take place in a wide range of settings including with governmental, nongovernmental, nonprofit, and for-profit agencies. To meet Mailman requirements, APEX with faculty or centers affiliated with Columbia University must be primarily focused on community engagement and be conducted in collaboration with a non-University partner. The project should benefit both the APEX site as well as satisfy the required public health competencies. Although an in-person APEX is preferred, both online and hybrid formats are acceptable.

Can I complete my APEX outside the US?

Students in the Global Health and Humanitarian Action (PHHA) Certificates are required to complete an international APEX, and students in other certificates can choose to do so. The Office of Field Practice has international APEX opportunities. Your department or certificate may also have some. All students traveling to international settings for their APEX, including in their home countries, must register their travel and comply with the Columbia University Global Travel requirements.

What is an acceptable APEX practice-based product?

The 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 of those products for review by their faculty advisors. Faculty will complete an assessment to ensure the selected competencies are reflected in the APEX products submitted. Products commonly requested by host agencies include community assessments, literature reviews, landscape analyses, program evaluations, data analysis, policy briefs and educational curricula.

What are public health competencies and how do they apply to the APEX?

Strengthening existing and developing new competencies is the essence of the APEX. Public health competencies are the knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors that public health professionals need to perform their work effectively. They cover a broad range of areas including, for example, communication, policy development, management and leadership. To ensure that the APEX fulfills this expectation, students will select and apply at least three of the 22 foundational public health competencies, and a minimum of two departmental competencies.

Can I be paid for my APEX?

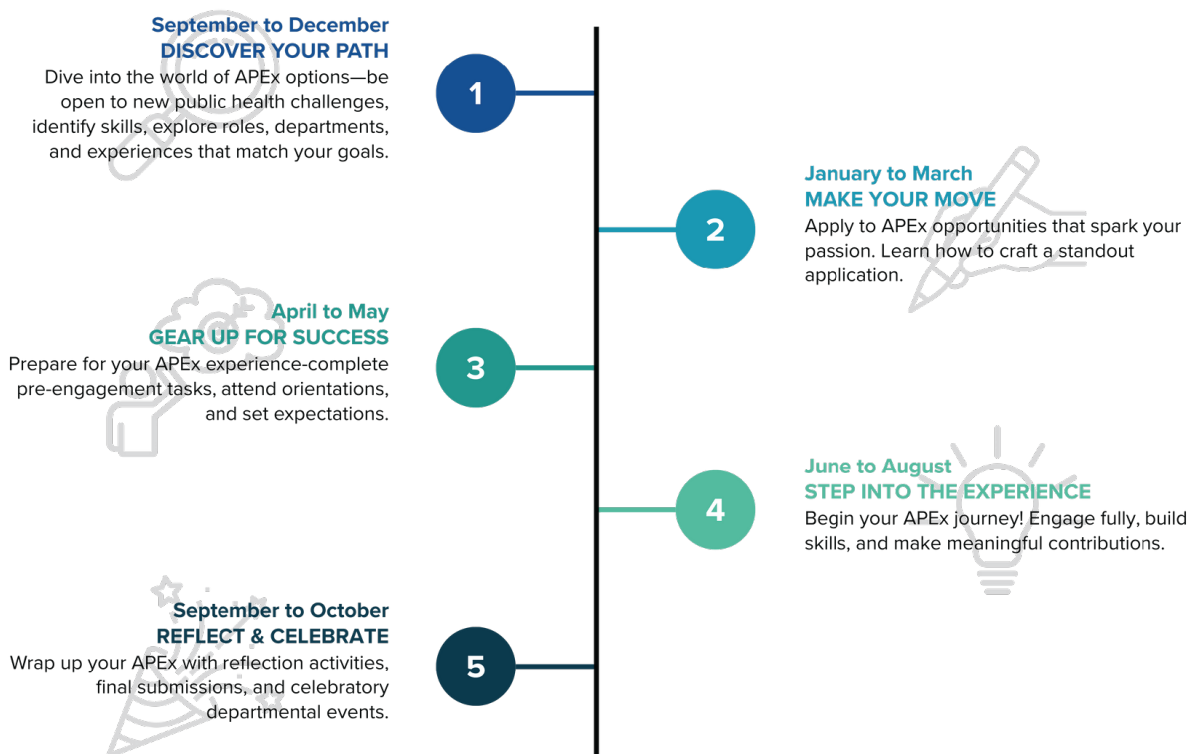
Your APEX can be paid or unpaid. APEX postings shared by the Office Field Practice indicate if the agency/ organization is offering a stipend or payment. Students who receive a stipend or payment from their host agency should work directly with them on the payment mechanism. Some organizations, such as international agencies, community-based organizations and 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 initiatives.

How is my department involved in approving and supporting my APEx?

The APEx is supported primarily through your department, including your faculty advisor and departmental APEx coordinator. Departmental APEx support includes seminars, listing specific departmental opportunities, and organizing post APEx activities. Your department approves all required APEx documentation including the Scope of Work, APEx Completion Form and Faculty Assessment Form.

What is the role of the Office of Field Practice (OFP)?

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. OFP identifies domestic and international APEx host organizations; solicits opportunities from a wide array of partnership agencies; and provides logistical support for students, departments, and site supervisors. OFP also offers paid fellowships for students completing their APEx at select sites.



For more information, please contact:

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