**Preceptor-Student Startup Discussion Guide**

**PURPOSE**

While students and preceptors start out discussing ***what*** the student will be doing, the success of the practicum often ties to ***how*** students conducts the work and their own interactions over the course of the practicum.

The preceptor-student relationship is the foundation of a successful Practicum experience for both the student and the preceptor. It blends elements of a supervisor-employee relationship with a mentoring role, and may be a connection that you value for many years to come. For these reasons, having a “startup discussion” about goals and expectations, as well as a spirit of inquiry and curiosity, can establish a useful foundation for both of you. Keep in mind that challenges along the way are normal! Both the preceptor and student are welcome to talk with the practice team or the course instructor to problem-solve and help get you both on track.

**TIMING**

Consider having this discussion as part of your initial meeting, and decide if you would like to have a mid-point check-in on some or all of these questions. The preceptor will complete a brief mid-point evaluation for the school as well as a final evaluation of the student. We recommend that the preceptor and student schedule a check-in on some of these questions with each other before the preceptor completes the mid-point evaluation to make sure you are able to address any challenges that arise.

**SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

*Goals for this practicum*

* What are the content goals and deliverables?
* Besides the project itself, what are the student’s professional goals for this experience? The preceptor’s goals?

*Getting to know each other*

* Preceptor: Describe role at the organization, previous experience that may be of interest to the student, strengths as a preceptor/mentor to students
* Student: Areas of strength, areas for growth. How can the preceptor be most helpful in your areas for growth? Do you have a couple of things you would like to experience that are not directly part of your project that your preceptor may be able to help with?

*Getting to know organizational culture*

* Preceptor: Describe the culture of this organization. What does the student need to know to be successful with you and your colleagues? Meetings? Communications? Dress? Punctuality? Unspoken rules? Do’s and don’ts? Any relevant history that the preceptor or another person can share? Other?

*Preceptor expectations as a supervisor*

* Establish a schedule to meet 120 hour minimum for practicum (MPH-45 program) or 200 hour minimum (MPH-65 program)
* Communications with preceptor (timing, preferences for email, phone, etc.)
* Connecting with your colleagues (peers, direct reports, supervisor)
* Management style
* If you have worked with students before, are there any areas that work well for you? Do not work well for you?
* Do you wish to schedule a check-in before the preceptor mid-point evaluation?

*General questions*

* What are the student and preceptor most excited about? Any concerns to be aware of and ways to address those?
* What does the student need to do (or avoid doing!) to be a star intern?
* If the student encounters some difficulty with the work, or something about how you work together, how would you like the student to handle it?
* Is there anything else that we should talk about today?

***We wish you a rewarding learning experience!***