Public Health Program

Applied Practice Experience Manual

Academic Year 2023-2024

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INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

The Applied Practice Experience (APEx) is a planned, supervised, and evaluated practical experience. It is an essential component of the Public Health Program, which accounts for 3 academic credits and requires a minimum 135-hour experience. The APEx is a hands-on experience in the field of public health that provides opportunities to apply and test public health concepts and theories in a practical setting and improve learning related to public health competencies.

The APEx is conducted in partnership with an agency or organization (hereafter "the APEx Organization") that provides a public health service, in the broad sense of public health. The APEx Organization may be a public health department, another government agency, such as the Indian Health Service, or a non-governmental organization, such as a hospital, other health care provider, or a community organization. An APEx Team assists the student to define, plan, and implement the APEx. The team consists of a Preceptor, who works in the APEx Organization, and the APEx Faculty Advisor, who oversees the APEx process and ensures that all requirements of the APEx are met. All team members must approve the APEx before work begins. Both the student and the APEx Organization should benefit from the APEx.

The overall objectives for the student during the APEx are to:

- Apply knowledge, techniques, and tools acquired in the classroom;
- Gain practical experience in a public health and/or community health setting;
- Demonstrate public health competency attainment;
- Learn how one particular organization functions;
- Explore a potential career choice; and
- Present the APEx to Public Health Program faculty and students.

Professional conduct is essential to the APEx experience. As an individual training to be a public health professional, each Public Health Program student is expected to conduct themself according to the high professional standards of the University of North Dakota (UND), the Public Health Program, and the APEx Organization.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMPETENCIES AND THE APEx

The curriculum for the Public Health Program degree is competency-based to improve the quality, relevance, and accountability of graduate public health education. The APEx is designed to extend and deepen public health competencies.

The APEx must include an experience that will enhance **at least five** of the Public Health Program Program's competencies. See *Appendix A* for a complete list of Foundational and Specialization Competencies.

1. **Two must** be foundational competencies from Groups 1-4 and/or 8;
2. **One must** be a foundational competency from Groups 5-7;
3. **One must** be a specialization competency; and
4. The remaining competency may be foundational or specialization.

THE APEx PROCESS

The APEx process consists of selecting an APEx Organization and Preceptor; identifying a project that meets the approval of the APEx Team; writing an APEx Proposal that describes the project; completing all requirements to begin the APEx and enrolling for the course; implementing the APEx as outlined in the APEx Proposal; and finally, presenting the experience to the Public Health Program faculty and students. Submission of all deliverables and forms is required to be graded. Each of these steps is discussed below. The forms required are:

- *Forms required prior to enrollment in the APEx:*
    - Form A: APEx Proposal (submitted via DocuSign)

- *Forms required to receive a grade in the APEx:*
    - Form B: APEx Weekly Log (submitted via DocuSign)
    - Preceptor's Evaluation (submitted via Qualtrics)
    - Student's Evaluation (submitted via Qualtrics)
    - APEx Faculty Advisor's Evaluation (submitted via Qualtrics)

> **In addition to providing the forms listed above, the student must provide the final APEx deliverables to the APEx Faculty Advisor and Public Health Program Assistant Director before the grade can be assigned.**

Selecting an APEx Organization and Preceptor

Students are introduced to the APEx at New Student Orientation, as well as at an APEx Orientation near the end of their first semester. There are several key ideas conveyed in these presentations. First, the APEx is a practical public health experience that benefits the APEx Organization, as well as furthers the student's learning and professional goals. Second, the APEx should ideally take place toward the end of the student's Public Health Program core studies. The summer after the first year is a good time to complete the APEx, but it can be done at other times during the year. It can be extended up to 3 semesters by registering for 1 credit/semester. Third, the APEx can take many forms, including:

- Research project, or part of a research project
- Community health intervention, or part of one
- Public policy analysis, or part of one
- Other project that relates to the planning, implementing, managing, or evaluating of a public health service, program, or initiative

An APEx Affiliation Agreement has been developed with local, national, and international public health organizations. For a complete list of existing APEx organizations, contact Ashley Bayne, the Public Health Program Assistant Director, at ashley.bayne@UND.edu. Students can also request an APEx site without an existing affiliation agreement, but this must be done a minimum of 3 months in advance of the APEx start date to ensure that an APEx Affiliation Agreement can be established.

> **After the APEx Orientation, the student must meet with the APEx Faculty Advisor to begin the process of identifying the APEx Organization and Preceptor and developing the APEx Proposal.**

APEx in the Place of Employment
Students can use their place of employment as the APEx Organization if the following conditions are met:

- APEx project is unique and separate from the student's employment responsibilities
- APEx Preceptor is not the student's usual supervisor

Writing the APEx Proposal
Developing an APEx Proposal (*Form A*), which must be approved by the student's APEx Team, ensures a well-defined project with clear goals and APEx deliverables that signals completion of the student's obligation. The student is ready to proceed to the next step once the APEx Team has signed the APEx Proposal.

> **All students must have an approved APEx Proposal before they enroll for the APEx.**
>
> For students intending to complete their APEx during the summer, a draft **APEx Proposal must be submitted to the APEx Faculty Advisor by April 15**. A final APEx Proposal is due before enrolling for the APEx.

The APEx Proposal must contain all of the following elements in this order:

A. **Background**
   a. APEx Organization and its Public Health Mission
      Describe the public health service(s) that the APEx Organization provides.
   b. Preceptor's Role in APEx Organization
      Describe the Preceptor's role in providing the public health service(s) of the APEx Organization, as well as his/her role relative to the project.

B. **Project Description**
   a. Summary of the Project
      Summarize what the APEx is intended to accomplish and the plan to achieve this; that is, describe very generally how the problem, question, or issue will be addressed.
   b. Goals and Objectives (in bullet form)
      i. State the goal(s) for the APEx and the associated objectives. The goal(s) and objectives will be the basis for evaluating the student's performance during the APEx.
      ii. Include "products" or "deliverables" as one of the APEx's goals. These are the APEx Products.

iii. One of the goals must be a presentation to the relevant audience for the APEx project, which will usually be within the APEx Organization. This presentation **cannot** be considered a product/deliverable.

iv. Goals are broad, generalized statements about what will be achieved, the "targets" to be reached. Objectives are the steps taken to reach these goal(s). Objectives should be SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time limited. Each objective should begin with an active verb, for example, support, assist, identify, define, develop, investigate, prepare, write, etc. **The goal is a general statement. The objectives are the steps needed to get there.**

v. If Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required to complete the APEx, one of the objectives will be to complete the application to the UND IRB, with responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research. See the UND IRB website for information about conducting research at UND and the forms needed to apply for IRB approval of research projects at: https://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/forms.html.

c. Clearly describe your planned deliverables. A minimum of two deliverables is required.

d. Clearly describe your APEx's contribution and importance to the APEx Organization.

C. Contributions to Public Health Program Learning

a. Relationship to Mission of Public Health Program
Discuss how the APEx relates to and advances the mission of the Public Health Program.

b. Foundational and Specialization Competencies Addressed by the APEx
Identify the Foundational and Specialization Competencies that will be strengthened through the APEx experience. Include **at least five** of the Public Health Program Program's competencies. See *Appendix A* for the list of Foundational and Specialization Competencies and the Public Health Program Program's Mission.

1. **Two must** be foundational competencies from Groups 1-4 and/or 8;
2. **One must** be a foundational competency from Groups 5-7;
3. **One must** be a specialization competency; and
4. The remaining competency may be foundational or specialization.

D. Timeline
Create a timeline that shows the time allotted to each goal and objective. The APEx Proposal should include a timeline that estimates how long it will take to complete each objective including the deliverables of the APEx and the presentation at the conclusion of the APEx. It will be helpful for the student to estimate the number of hours that it will take to complete each step in the process, as they must total to at least 135 hours. The last "step" in the timeline should be the oral presentation. All other work regarding the APEx deliverables must be completed prior to this presentation.

> **When the APEx Proposal is approved by the APEx Faculty Advisor, the student must send *Form A -the Proposal -* to the Preceptor. Once the Preceptor has reviewed and approved the Proposal, s/he must sign *Form A.***

Enrolling in the APEx
Once the APEx Proposal (*Form A*) has been approved and signed by the Preceptor and APEx Faculty Advisor, the Public Health Program Assistant Director gives the student permission to enroll. Students may register for 1 to 3 credits, repeated up to 3 times as needed to obtain a total of 3 credits. PH 594 requires a permission number to enter in Campus Connection to enroll.

> **Students must have an APEx Proposal approved by the APEx Team before they enroll for the APEx.**

Please note that before given permission to enroll, students also need to have completed:

- All Public Health Program core courses (or be in the last semester of core courses) and be in good academic standing
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) training in Human Subjects Protection
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Training
- Any requirements of the APEx Organization such as immunizations
- A criminal background check (if required)

Training in Human Subjects Protection
Training must be completed at least 1 month before registering for the APEx hours, but it is normally completed in PH 531: Biostatistics 1. UND uses the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course, an online training program. Public Health Program students are required to complete the course for Social/Behavioral Researchers and provide a PDF or printout of the certificate of completion to the Public Health Program Assistant Director. Instructions for completing Human Subjects Protection training are found on the Institutional Review Board website:
https://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/human-subject-education.html

HIPAA Training
Training must be completed at least 1 month before registering for the APEx hours, but it is normally completed in PH 531: Biostatistics 1. Public Health Program students are required to complete the training and provide a PDF or printout of the certificate of completion to the Public Health Program Assistant Director.

Criminal Background Check
A certified background check is required at least 1 month before registering for the APEx hours. If it has been more than one year since the student's last background check, another background check is required before enrolling in the APEx. The Public Health Program Assistant Director will provide instructions and program code when the student is ready to enroll. The student pays this cost.
See: http://www.verifiedcredentials.com

Completing the APEx

The Preceptor must meet regularly with the student to review progress, provide input and advice, help to solve problems that have arisen, and ensure that the student is meeting the goals of the APEx. All students must maintain an APEx Weekly Log (*Form B*) throughout to document that they have fulfilled the 135-hour requirement of the APEx. When the Preceptor is satisfied that the APEx is complete (that is, has met the goals and objectives of the APEx), s/he completes the Preceptor's Evaluation via Qualtrics. The student completes the Student's Evaluation (*via Qualtrics*) and provides the APEx Weekly Log (*Form B*) and the final APEx deliverables to the Public Health Program Assistant Director and APEx Faculty Advisor. The final form, the APEx Faculty Advisor's Evaluation, is filled out by the APEx Faculty Advisor to evaluate the student's oral presentation, competency attainment, and APEx deliverables. The Public Health Program Assistant Director will review all forms for completeness.

Evaluating the APEx

When all forms and the APEx deliverables are provided to and reviewed by the APEx Faculty Advisor, the APEx can be evaluated. The APEx is graded by the APEx Faculty Advisor based upon the Preceptor's evaluation of the student's performance and the Advisor's assessment of the APEx deliverables.

SPECIFICATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

APEx Organization

- Provide the student with a mentored, practical learning experience related to public health.
- Provide a qualified person (employee or affiliate) to mentor the student (the Preceptor).
- Certify that the APEx Organization has in place policies that protect the student and employees from sexual harassment and discrimination while they are onsite during the APEx. The APEx Organization agrees to provide the University with copies of its non-discrimination and sexual harassment policies, if requested.
- Provide the student with a name badge, as necessary.
- Provide an orientation to the student at the beginning of the experience, which includes an overview of the site's mission and goals and physical facilities, personnel, and other operational systems needed for the student to function appropriately at the site.
- Ensure that the student follows requirements of the APEx Organization, which may include vaccinations or health insurance and may be in addition to the requirements of the Public Health Program.

Preceptor

- Guide development of the APEx Proposal and approve its final form (*Form A*) with signature.
- Supervise the student during the conduct of the APEx and communicate to the student any deficiencies in performance and provide the student with an opportunity to correct any deficient areas prior to the completion of the experience.
- Communicate progress and coordinate grading with the APEx Faculty Advisor and/or the Public Health Program Assistant Director.
- Review and sign the student's APEx Weekly Log (*Form B*), which records hours worked and tasks performed.
- Complete an evaluation, via Qualtrics, of the student's work on the APEx.

- Treat as confidential student educational records, which are subject to the Federal Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA).

Public Health Program Assistant Director

- Provide the student with a copy of the APEx Manual and all required APEx Forms.
- Meet with the student to describe the APEx and brainstorm possible APEx projects, if requested.
- Provide a list of APEx Organizations with contact persons for which the Public Health Program has an APEx Affiliation Agreement.
- Review the APEx Proposal (*Form A*) to ensure that it is complete.
- Ensure that the student has completed sufficient coursework to conduct the APEx.
- Ensure that the student has completed a background check within 1 year prior to registering for the APEx.
- Ensure that the student has completed CITI training in protection of human subjects and HIPPA training before undertaking the APEx.
- Ensure that the student meets all policy requirements of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and UND.
- Intercede on the student's behalf if necessary to clarify student and Preceptor roles and facilitate understanding and agreement as to goals, conduct, commitment, and deliverables.
- Provide permission for student to register for the APEx.
- Collect and review for completion all required forms and the APEx deliverables. Provide approved forms and the APEx Products to the APEx Faculty Advisor for review and assignment of grade.
- Ensure that all requirements of the APEx are met.
- Ensure that the student receives a grade for the APEx.
- Notify the APEx Organization if at any time a student files a grievance in which the APEx Organization is a party.

APEx Faculty Advisor

- Orient Preceptors to the APEx process and goals and the responsibilities of each member of the APEx Team.
- Guide development of the APEx Proposal and approve its final form (*Form A*) with signature.
- Provide information on the IRB process, if necessary for an APEx.
- Interact with the Preceptor and Public Health Program Assistant Director, as appropriate and needed, to solve problems related to APEx implementation.
- Review all forms and the APEx Products and assign the student's grade.
- Evaluate Oral Presentation.

Public Health Program Student

- Develop an APEx Proposal that describes the project – its purpose, rationale, goals, timeline, and products – and obtain approval of the APEx Proposal (*Form A*) from the APEx Team.
- Meet regularly with the Preceptor during the APEx.
- Comply with the policies, procedures, and operational standards of the APEx Organization.

- Behave professionally at all times, including attention to punctuality, meeting deadlines, and APEx Organization dress code.
- Provide the APEx Products to the Preceptor and Public Health Program Assistant Director upon completion.
- Complete the APEx oral presentation.
- Complete all forms required for the APEx including the APEx Weekly Log (*Form B*) and the Student's Evaluation via Qualtrics. Provide these to the Public Health Program Assistant Director. The Preceptor will have access to the results of the student evaluation upon request.
- Comply with the APEx Organization's privacy rules and policies and sign any necessary confidentiality agreements.
- Complete CITI training in protection of human subjects, HIPAA training, and the Background Check (if required).

PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICS

Students must consistently demonstrate the core attributes of professionalism. The UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences has defined the following behaviors as indicators of professionalism**:**

- Commitment to Excellence
- Honesty and Integrity
- Respect for Others
- Empathy and Compassion
- Professional Responsibility
- Social Responsibility
- Altruism

Students must possess the emotional health necessary for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of sound judgment, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with members of the academic program and community. They must have a high level of compassion for others, motivation to serve, integrity, and a consciousness of social values and possess sufficient interpersonal skills to interact positively with people from all levels of society, all ethnic backgrounds, and all belief systems. Academic dishonesty and professional misconduct are considered unacceptable. If there is doubt about whether or not conduct is appropriate, students should query the guidance provided on the website for the UND Code of Student Life policy.
See: https://und.edu/code-of-student-life/

The Public Health Program expects students to dress appropriately in business/business casual attire. Students are expected to always demonstrate good judgment and professionalism when present at the APEx Organization.

APPENDIX A: FOUNDATIONAL AND SPECIALIZATION COMPETENCIES, MPH PROGRAM MISSION

MPH PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the University of North Dakota Master of Public Health (MPH) Program is to support population health improvement in North Dakota, the Northern Plains and beyond through education, research, and service that create strategies and opportunities needed to promote health and well-being, prevent disease and injury, and pursue health and social equity in all populations.

FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES

Group 1: 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

Group 2: Public Health & Health Care Systems
5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory 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 at organizational, community and societal levels

Group 3: 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 or implementation 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
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs

Group 4: Policy in Public Health
12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
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

Group 5: Leadership
16. Apply principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges

Group 6: Communication
18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors

19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content

Group 7: Interprofessional Practice
21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams

Group 8: Systems Thinking
22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

SPECIALIZATION COMPETENCIES

Health Management & Policy
1. Design and appraise a health organization's resource management plan
2. Compare and contrast leadership strategies in public health
3. Analyze multiple policy options in order to recommend a course of action to decision makers
4. Evaluate and manage diverse stakeholder interests
5. Develop health policies and implementation strategies

Population Health Research & Analytics
1. Develop research questions and hypotheses
2. Identify or develop data sets pertaining to research questions and hypotheses
3. Apply study designs appropriate for research questions and hypotheses, and the corresponding analytic methodology
4. Analyze data using appropriate statistical methods and interpret findings
5. Translate and disseminate research results

Indigenous Health
1. Analyze the impact of colonial processes on Indigenous health outcomes
2. Propose strategies to implement essential public health services in Indigenous communities
3. Evaluate evidence-based practices for their impact on Indigenous populations
4. Apply principles of health equity to Indigenous populations
5. Design a health promotion strategy that values and incorporates Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge

APPENDIX B: APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE FORMS

The following forms and surveys must be completed for the Applied Practice Experience (APEx) and submitted to the Public Health Program Assistant Director:

- *Form A: APEx Proposal – Submitted via DocuSign link below*
  - Use Form A template below
  - To be completed and submitted by the student to the Assistant Director and APEx Faculty Advisor before the student registers for PH 594 APEx
  - DocuSign PowerForm link to submit APEx proposal: https://na3.docusign.net/Member/PowerFormSigning.aspx?PowerFormId=e7d5a348-8dcc-4332-b3a2-dbb459a9449f&env=na3&acct=0b6b418b-b8d9-464a-afd1-2c657718f7b9&v=2

- *Form B: APEx Weekly Log – Submitted via DocuSign link below at completion of APEx*
  - Use Form B template below
  - To be completed and submitted by the student to the Public Health Program Assistant Director and APEx Faculty Advisor to receive a grade for PH 594 APEx
  - DocuSign PowerForm link to submit weekly log(s): https://na3.docusign.net/Member/PowerFormSigning.aspx?PowerFormId=93dad354-891f-4ccc-b2ea-29d22416595f&env=na3&acct=0b6b418b-b8d9-464a-afd1-2c657718f7b9&v=2

- *Preceptor's Evaluation Survey in Qualtrics*
  - To be completed by Preceptor once the APEx deliverables and experience conclude, to receive a grade for PH 594 APEx

- *Student's Evaluation Survey in Qualtrics*
  - To be completed by student to receive a grade for PH 594 APEx

- *APEx Faculty Advisor's Evaluation Survey in Qualtrics*
  - To be completed by the APEx Faculty Advisor, to receive a grade for PH 594 APEx

If you have any questions about the APEx's purpose and/or process, please contact the Public Health Program Assistant Director.

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Ashley Bayne, Assistant Director
School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Suite E161
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Tel: 701.777.6368

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FORM A: APEX PROPOSAL
Submit approved proposal via DocuSign

	Student	Preceptor
Name		
Student ID #		
Email Address		
Daytime Telephone #		
MPH Specialization		

APEx Organization

    Name:

    Address:

    City/State/Zip:

FORM A: APEX PROPOSAL (CONTINUED)

Name of Student:
APEx Title:

APEx Proposal starts here - See **Student APEx Manual** for Instructions.

FORM B: APEX WEEKLY LOG

On a weekly basis, document your hours and provide a brief description of activities. At the completion of your APEx, submit to your preceptor for signature via DocuSign.
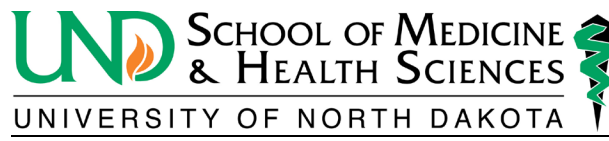
Name of Student:
APEx Title:

Week	Hours	Brief Description of Activities
TOTAL HOURS		

Note: Use as many sheets as necessary to log your hours.

_____   _____
Preceptor's Signature   **Date**

APEX EVALUATIONS

PRECEPTOR'S EVALUATION

It is the student's responsibility to notify Preceptor of and share link for evaluation.

Qualtrics link for APEx Preceptor's evaluation: https://und.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7WXr3x7avjRVTT0

STUDENT'S EVALUATION

Qualtrics link for student's evaluation: https://und.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8bG3FivFaHVZt5A

APEX FACULTY ADVISOR'S EVALUATION

Qualtrics link for APEx Faculty Advisor's evaluation: https://und.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9Lj0mJ6ExU950yO

APPENDIX C: APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST

The following checklist is provided to help guide you through the Applied Practice Experience (APEx). The completed checklist does **not** need to be turned in.

PRIOR TO ENROLLING IN APEx, YOU MUST:

_____ Meet with APEx Faculty Advisor/Assistant Director to discuss and identify potential APEx Organization, Preceptor, and APEx project

_____ Contact potential APEx Organization and Preceptor and identify APEx project. (*If choosing a new APEx Organization, an agreement must be initiated at least 3 months prior to enrolling in the APEx.*)

_____ Complete all MPH core courses (or be in the last semester of core courses)

_____ Complete Institutional Review Board (IRB) training in Human Subjects Protection *(at least 30 days prior)*

_____ Complete Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Training *(at least 30 days prior)*

_____ Complete any requirements of APEx Organization, such as immunizations

_____ Complete criminal background check, if more than one year will have elapsed since last check

_____ Submit Form A via DocuSign: APEx Organization, Preceptor & Proposal *(must be approved and signed by APEx Team)*

TO RECEIVE GRADE IN APEX, THE FOLLOWING MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:

_____ Form B via DocuSign: APEx Weekly Log (*completed by student and signed by Preceptor*)

_____ Preceptor's Evaluation via Qualtrics

_____ Student's Evaluation via Qualtrics

_____ APEx Faculty Advisor's Evaluation via Qualtrics

_____ Two APEx Deliverables via email to APEx Faculty Advisor and Assistant Director (e.g., Report, Research Paper)