**Department of Public Health**

**Special Project Guidelines and Requirements**

**for Academic Year**

**2018-2019**

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# A. Introduction

Preparing a Master's Special Project is an integral component of professional training in public health. It involves the student entering into a professional service agreement with a health-related agency to plan and develop a response to a health-related problem. The Special Project is completed in three phases: the application, the proposal, and the execution.

The Application – This occurs in the semester prior to enrollment in the Special Project course. Students submit an application packet to the Department and receive approvals or denials in writing. Once approved, students enroll in PCH 593, which is the first semester of Special Project.

The Proposal – The first semester of Special Project, while enrolled in PCH 593, is preparatory in nature. The purpose is to give the student ample time to work with his/her advisor and preceptor in order to create a complete, written proposal for the project. The proposal will describe the background and methods for what the student intends to do. It must be approved by the advisor, preceptor, and department chair in order to receive a passing grade in PCH 593. Students who do not complete an approved proposal before the end of the semester will need to re-enroll in PCH 593 the next semester.

The Execution – The purpose of the second semester of Special Project, while enrolled in PCH 594, is for the student to execute his/her plan, as described in the approved proposal. The student will implement the project and complete a written document that describes the outcome of the project. This final document must also be approved by the advisor, preceptor, and department chair in order to receive a passing grade for the course. Students who do not complete their projects and receive approval of their final documents will need to re-enroll in PCH 594 the next semester.

The Special Project requires the integration of theory, science and ingenuity into professional practice. You will plan and develop a response to an agency problem. You are asked to demonstrate your capability to provide valuable service to a health-related agency. There are two types of service agreements.

* An ***agency has identified*** a health-related problem and wants you to explore it and create an appropriate response (e.g., the agency wants an unspecified response to lower the incidence of diabetes among employees); or
* An ***agency has identified*** a health-related problem and wants you to respond to it in a pre-determined manner (e.g., the agency wants an evaluation of an existing employee physical activity program).

The Special Project represents an opportunity for you to work closely with one faculty member and an agency preceptor in your field**.** One characteristic of good graduate education is the opportunity for faculty and students to work together in a close relationship characterized by mentoring. While much of the content of any field can be taught in traditional classes, there is always some “art” to any discipline. These nuances are best conveyed in the context of a close working relationship. Working on a Special Project under the close tutelage of faculty and an agency preceptor, provides an opportunity for learning that is not typically found in other graduate school activities.

The Special Project is an exercise in self-discipline. Completing a Special Project requires sustained initiative and focus for an extended period of time.

To recap, a Special Project usually takes the form a professional service agreement to respond to a health-related problem. The goal of this activity is to put into practice your conceptual, technical, cultural, and interpersonal competencies within the field of public health and within your specialty.

In addition to this document, Graduate School guidelines for the Special Project are available at <https://www.southernct.edu/academics/graduate/gradcapstoneexperiences.html>. These documents are essential for the successful completion of your Special Project. You must obtain these documents when you begin your Special Project, read them thoroughly, and keep them readily available throughout the process of conducting and writing your Special Project Proposal and final Special Project Report.

# B. Special Project Eligibility

To be eligible to enroll in Special Project Seminar I (PCH 593) you must:

* Be a matriculated student in the final year of study for the M.P.H. degree,
* Have completed an application packet to begin your capstone and received approval in writing.
* Possess a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 for all courses completed toward the degree,
* Have achieved a grade of "C+" or higher in each course taken toward the degree,

To be eligible to enroll in Special Project Seminar II (PCH 594) you must:

* Have completed an approved Special Project proposal and received a “P” (passing) grade in PCH 593.
* Submitted a signed copy of the electronic proposal approval sheet to the Graduate School, which can be found on their website.
* possess a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 for all courses completed toward the degree,
* have successfully completed all public health core and specialization courses as specified in the Plan of Study (\*note: PCH 564 Health Policy and PCH 577 Program Planning & Evaluation can be taken concurrently with Special Project Seminar I, in the fall semester, and must be successfully completed to move to Special Project II); students can enroll in PCH 548 Public Health Administration and PCH 595 Public Health Internship concurrent with Special Project Seminar II. ***None of these classes can be taken AFTER the Special Project.***
* have achieved a grade of "C+" or higher in each course taken toward the degree.

# C. Special Project Requirements

1. You must select a Special Project topic significant to public health which may include one of the several Special Project types approved by the Department of Public Health. Your advisor will help you devise an acceptable and appropriate project topic.
2. Your Special Project must demonstrate that you have mastery in the field of public health, can apply appropriate theory and research methodology to the design of an intervention, can use relevant bibliographic techniques, and can report project results in a manner worthy of submission for publication in refereed professional journals.

# D. Research Involving Human Participants

By federal law, all research involving human or animal subjects requires prior ethical review and approval by an independent review committee. At Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), the relevant committee for research involving human subjects is the Institutional Review Board (IRB). No data collection or recruitment of subjects may take place without IRB approval. This requirement includes use of all surveys, questionnaires, tests, interviews, focus groups, recruitment of study participants, and any form of primary and/or secondary data collection involving human participants. Additionally, no vertebrate animal capture, purchase, or research may take place without Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval. IACUC has jurisdiction over laboratory and field research involving all vertebrate animals.

Before beginning a research study, the student should consult with the advisor regarding the procedure for obtaining appropriate ethical review. Copies of the necessary forms and instructions for submission can be obtained from the School of Graduate Studies office or online at <http://southernct.edu/academics/graduate/research/rpp/index.html>.

In cases where research involving human or animal subjects is being performed at another institution, approval must be obtained from that institution’s appropriate review committee(s). Copies of such approval should be attached to the SCSU forms to expedite the review process.

Please note the following procedures:

1. If you are planning to conduct a pilot study as part of your research you will be required to submit a separate IRB application for your pilot study. This application should be limited to the study population and specific methodology that you intend to use for your pilot study.
2. After IRB approval of your pilot study application you should complete your pilot study and then submit a separate IRB application for your actual study which includes a description of your study population and any changes in methodology (e.g. changes in survey questions, data collection procedures etc.) resulting from your pilot study.
3. After IRB approval of this second application you can begin data collection. If any additional changes in methodology are made during the course of your study you are required to file a “Request for Revision” form and obtain IRB approval prior to continuing with your data collection.

The SCSU homepage contains a “Research” link to information, applications, and instructions for the SCSU Institutional Review Board including a link to a required online certification course. (<http://southernct.edu/academics/graduate/research/rpp/index.html>.) Please note that you are also required to submit a “Research Completed” form to the IRB no later than 90 days after your research project has been completed.

# E. Integrity of Research and Other Scholarly Work

Both the School of Graduate Studies and the Department of Public Health expect the highest standards of ethical behavior on the part of all persons engaged in research, and other scholarly work. Students are required to comply with the following School of Graduate Studies requirements about honesty and integrity in research, as in all scholarly activity. Students are reminded that areas of misconduct in scholarship include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Falsification of data, which ranges from sheer fabrication through selective reporting including the omission of data.
2. Plagiarism, which involves taking and using, as one’s own, the writing and/or ideas of another and ranges from outright stealing to inadequate attribution.
3. Violations of rules to protect patients, research subjects, and other persons and animals, which, while not fraudulent in the traditional sense, are unethical and undermine the integrity of the academic process.
4. The use of commercial organizations or paid individuals to write all or part of the Special Project.

Violations of the requirements for integrity of scholarship shall result in a failing grade for the Special Project and dismissal from the Graduate School.

# F. The Special Project Proposal (PCH 593)

### 1. Overview

The Special Project Proposal is a crucial part of the Special Project process because it determines how smoothly the work involved in preparing your Special Project will proceed. Final approval of the Special Project Special Project is largely determined by the clarity, organization and precision of your Special Project Proposal, the actual plan for your Special Project.

The Special Project Proposal is developed as the primary deliverable for PCH 593: Special Project Seminar I. It must be approved by your Special Project Advisor, Agency Preceptor, and Department Chairperson. Once your document has been approved, you must complete a Special Project Proposal Signature Sheet, and obtain the necessary signatures. You will submit ONLY the completed Signature Sheet (not the Special Project proposal document) to the Graduate Dean for approval. You must obtain IRB approval for either your pilot study (if required) or actual study prior to submitting your Special Project Proposal signature sheet to the School of Graduate Studies.

You will be assigned a Special Project advisor during the summer prior to enrolling in Special Project Seminar I (PCH 593). Beginning in the fall semester, your Special Project will be responsible for guiding you in formulating and designing an original Special Project Proposal. During your first meeting with your advisor, you should gain an understanding of how the process for advising with take place, length of time required for your advisor to review documents and how and when contact/communication will be made. Special Project advisors are not typically available during the summer but individual advisors may be able to offer recommendations for work that you can do independently prior to the commencement of Special Project Seminar I in the fall.

An Agency Preceptor will be required for your Special Project. The Agency Preceptor is selected on the basis of established expertise and willingness to mentor. The Agency Preceptor must be employed by the sponsoring organization and be supportive in the development of a specific intervention to address a problem/need experienced by the agency. In addition, it is expected that the Agency Preceptor will provide you with access to all relevant agency files and data and appropriate guidance. Since the Project Advisor has overall responsibility for approval of the content and quality of the Special Project, he or she will have the final say over differences in opinion concerning proposed changes to the Prospectus or Special Project Report. If there are major concerns, the Agency Preceptor is encouraged to confer with the Project Advisor, as necessary.

Once your Agency Preceptor has been approved you must complete the “Letter of Intent to Serve as Agency Preceptor”, obtain their signature, and submit it to your Special Project Advisor by the third week of PCH 593. The Agency Preceptor is an integral part of the Special Project approval process and is one of the signatories of the Special Project Proposal and final Special Project. Therefore, it is essential that the Agency Preceptor be kept apprised of your progress on an ongoing basis.

### 2. Required Contents of the Special Project Proposal

The entire Proposal should be **no longer than 15pages**, exclusive of preliminaries, appendices and references, written in APA style (6th edition). A complete proposal will include the following sections, in the order they are presented below:

**Required Sections of the Special Project Proposal (in order)**

1. Title Page (see attached)
2. Acknowledgments (optional)
3. Abstract
4. Table of Contents
5. List of Tables
6. List of Figures
7. Prospectus Narrative (see below for details)
8. Appendices
9. References

**Section Details**

1. Title Page: Includes project title, name of author, submitted to, name of university granting the degree and month and year submitted. The template for this page is provided as an *attachment* to this packet.
2. Acknowledgments: You may opt to include a section here that recognizes those individuals who provided you with guidance and support during this process. )
3. Abstract: Summary of Special Project Proposal. Captures the “essence” of the Proposal in approximately 150 words.
4. Table of Contents: Includes section headings and subheadings, appendices and references. All entries are worded exactly as they appear within your Prospectus.
5. List of Tables: Includes all tables, if applicable, contained within your Proposal.
6. List of Figures: Includes all figures, if applicable, contained within your Proposal.
7. Proposal Narrative: This section comprises the heart of your proposal document. It includes all of the components listed below.
   1. Project Purpose and Description: A brief introduction and overview of the Special Project. Addresses the need to be addressed among the affected population.
   2. Description of the Host Agency: An overview/description of the participating agency, including how this project will address gaps in services. Include preceptor name and qualifications.
   3. Literature Review\*: A thorough literature review addressing the health condition, population, gaps in services, and similar programs that have been previously conducted.
   4. Theoretical Background: A brief overview of the theory or theories chosen to guide the project, including justification for and evidence of use with similar interventions.
   5. Significance and Relevance: Justifies the importance of the service agreement. Establishes its relevance to one or more of the seven areas of responsibilities of the health educator or one or more of the ten essential services of public health. (See page 2-3).
   6. Proposed Service Agreement and Work Plan: Includes intended setting and population, goals and objectives, timeline, resources needed, and assessment plan.
   7. Ethics Governing Project: Describes a commitment to adherence to the appropriate code of ethics (i.e., Code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession or Public Health Code of Ethics) that will govern the conduct of the proposed project.
   8. Author’s Qualifications: Establishes the applicant’s credentials and capacity (knowledge, skills and access to resources) to complete the service agreement.
   9. Concluding Statement: Briefly summarizes key topics from the narrative.
8. Appendices: Includes all required supportive documentation.
9. References: Those sources cited within the Narrative.

\*For assistance with literature reviews, see the following resources:

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature_review.html>

<http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/literaturereview.html>

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/ReviewofLiterature.html>

# G. The Special Project Final Document (PCH 594)

### 1. Overview

While the Special Project *Proposal* is written in future tense, the **Special Project final document is written in the past tense**. The final document includes all the sections of the approved Proposal, and it must be revised into past tense and edited to include changes that occurred in methodology and updates in the literature review.

Students are cautioned to NOT utilize previous Special Project documents for guidance with style and format requirements. The 6th edition of the APA manual was published in 2009 and this introduced substantial changes in format requirement for the Special Project document.

### 2. Required Contents of the Special Project Report

The Special Project Report is a thorough description of the process and output of the service agreement. In contrast to the Prospectus, which was written in the future tense, the Report is written in the past tense. The Prospectus was written as a proposal and the Special Project Report is in the form of an evaluation report. Some of the components of the Prospectus will move into the Report, but the Prospectus itself is not included in this Report.

It is important to note that the information you provide in this report be thorough. Ensure that there is enough detail so that any reader may gain a full understanding of the steps you took to conduct the Project. Take detailed notes throughout your journey of creation and implementation of your project; this will help you when it comes time to prepare your sections.

**Required Sections of the Special Project Final Report (in order)**

1. Title Page
2. Copyright Notice (Optional)
3. Acknowledgment (Optional)
4. Abstract
5. Table of Contents
6. List of Tables (if applicable)
7. List of Figures (if applicable)
8. Section One: Introduction
9. Section Two: Methodology
10. Section Three: Project Results
11. Section Four: Discussion and Recommendations
12. References
13. Appendices (List individually by letter and title)

**Section Details**

1. Title Page: Includes project title, name of author, submitted to, name of university granting the degree and graduation month and year submitted.
2. Copyright Notice: Include here if applicable.
3. Acknowledgments: You may opt to include a section here that recognizes those individuals who provided you with guidance and support during this process.
4. Abstract: Begins with Author, Title, Project Advisor, Agency Preceptor, Institution, Degree, and Year listed. Then moves to summary of Special Project Report which captures the "essence" of the Project in approximately 150 words.
5. Table of Contents: Includes section headings and subheadings, appendices and References. All entries are worded exactly as they appear within your Project.
6. List of Tables: Includes all tables contained within your Project.
7. List of Figures: Includes all figures contained within your Project.
8. **Section One: Introduction**
   1. Project Purpose and Description: An overview and description of the Project, including the purpose.
   2. Description of the Host Agency: An overview/description of the participating agency, including how this project addressed gaps in services. Includes the service agreement with the host agency. Identifies the name, credentials, title and contact information of the agency preceptor with whom you worked.
   3. Literature Review: Includes and expands upon the literature review from the Prospectus; addresses in detail the health condition, population, related studies and other relevant information.
   4. Theoretical Background: Identifies the theory (or theories) that informed the project. Description of the theory and how it is relevant to the design of the Project (health condition, population and/or strategies selected).
   5. Significance and Relevance: Justifies the importance of the service agreement. Establishes its relevance to one or more of the seven areas of responsibilities of the health educator or one or more of the ten essential services of public health. (See page 3).
   6. Goals and Objectives: The goals and objectives that guided the design of the Project. Objectives are to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound). Refer to the “Proposed Service Agreement and Work Plan” section of your proposal.
   7. Ethics Governing Project: Describes a commitment to adherence to the appropriate code of ethics (i.e., Code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession or Public Health Code of Ethics) that will govern the conduct of the proposed project. Includes date of IRB acceptance (letter goes in the Appendices).
   8. Author’s Qualifications: Establishes the applicant’s credentials and capacity (knowledge, skills and access to resources) to complete the service agreement.
   9. Concluding Statement: Presents a brief synopsis of Section One.
9. **Section Two: Methodology**
   1. Introductory statement: A brief introduction to the Project’s methodology and activities
   2. Needs Assessment (if applicable): A description of the needs assessment process related to the population and need for the intended activity.
   3. Design of Project: A detailed description of the design and work plan of the project – the action steps taken to implement the tasks of the Project. Includes recruitment, sample, activities, timeline and resources needed for the Project (*updated from the proposal*).
   4. Instrumentation: Any instruments created for the project, including the steps taken to design the instrument and the use of the instrument. Addresses reliability and validity of the instrument(s). Address the creation and testing methods used related to instrumentation. Examples of instruments include pretest/posttests, demographic surveys, focus group guides, etc.
   5. Pilot Study: Detailed description of pilot study processes that were undertaken to test the intervention created for the Project. Do not address instruments again or the results here – keep the focus on the pilot study process and activities for the Project intervention (lesson plans, website, etc).
   6. Concluding Statement: Summary of the methodology used for the Project.
10. **Section Three: Project Results**
    1. Introductory Statement: Introduces the outcomes of the project.
    2. Needs Assessment Results (if applicable): A description of what was found during the needs assessment, related to the population and the need for the intended activity.
    3. Intervention: Corresponding to the goals and objectives of the Project, describe the development process you undertook to develop the **original** **prototype/intervention**. In detail, describe the material development process – including materials created and the process that led to creation of the materials. Address the medium used and messages created. Provide enough detail so that it can be replicated by another reader.
    4. Pilot Study Results: Presents the results of the pretesting of the prototype/intervention. Include a description of the outcomes determined by the pilot study to evaluate the prototype/intervention.
    5. Final Intervention: Describes the nature of the finished intervention and the processes used to achieve the refinement. Include how the results of the pilot study/activities impacted the final outcome of the materials created and how it is different from the original prototype/intervention.
    6. Concluding Statement: Brief synopsis of the section.
11. **Section Four: Discussion and Recommendations**
    1. Interpretation of the results: Describe the outcomes of your project. Was it successful, and if so, what made it successful? Include a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken to develop the intervention.
    2. Significance and Implications for Practice: Discusses the likely impact of the intervention developed on health education or public health practice. Describe the impact, if appropriate, on the host agency for receiving the intervention and/or prototype. Note any future recommendations related to the outcomes of the Project.
    3. Lessons Learned: Discuss the impact of conducting the Project on your educational and professional development. Address what skills were enhanced and any lessons learned that will have a future impact on one’s public health career.
    4. Concluding Statement: Summary of the section and the Project.
12. **Appendices:** You will have appendices for both the Special Project Proposal and the final Special Project. In both cases, you must provide full, high-quality copies of all documents that were referenced in your chapters. In cases where the document is not available in an electronic form, it should be scanned to create and electronic file that can be inserted into your Special Project document. Examples of appendices include but are not limited to: 1) IRB approval letters, 2) Intervention 3) Informed consent forms, 4) Cover letters, 5) Data collection instruments or interview guides, 6) Schedule of activities. References must be made in the text of your chapters to the inclusion of these materials in the Appendices. Do not include letters of permission from organizations or agencies who have supported your recruitment efforts as this could potentially violate participant confidentiality. Appendices should be labeled (A, B, C, etc.) and listed in the order they appear within the document.
13. **References:** Provide a complete list of all sources cited in the text. All citations in the text and final reference list must adhere to the guidelines provided in the current edition of the APA Publication Manual. The final version of the Special Project Proposal and final Special Project should have one reference list that is presented in alphabetical order. Note: You should include a list of references with each draft document submitted to your Special Project Advisor.

# H. Sample Timelines

### 1. Sample Timeline for PCH 593: Special Project Seminar I

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Component** | **Recipient** | **Signatures** |
| 1 | Meet with advisor to devise work plan |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 | Agency Preceptor Form | Special Project Advisor | Agency Preceptor,  Special Project Advisor |
| 4 | Narrative Sections 1-3 | Special Project Advisor |  |
| 5 | Narrative Sections 4-5 | Special Project Advisor |  |
| 6 | Narrative Sections 6-9 | Special Project Advisor |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |
| 8 | IRB application submitted | School of Graduate Studies | Special Project Advisor  Department Chair |
| 9 | Preliminaries completed (final) |  |  |
| 10 | IRB approval obtained |  |  |
| 11 | Final Draft of Special Project Proposal (including preliminaries) completed | Special Project Advisor  Second Reader |  |
| 12 | Special Project Proposal Signature Sheet completed and signatures obtained |  | Special Project Advisor  Second Reader  Department Chair |
| 13 | Special Project Proposal Signature Sheet submitted to the School of Graduate Studies (do not submit Special Project Proposal document) | School of Graduate Studies | Graduate Dean |
| 14 |  |  |  |
| X | Copy of final Special Project Proposal provided to Special Project Advisor (print and CD) and Graduate Coordinator (CD) | Special Project Advisor  Graduate Coordinator |  |
|  |  |  |  |

### 2. Sample Timeline for PCH 594: Special Project Seminar II

Upon completion and approval of your Special Project Proposal, you must work closely with your Special Project Advisor to set up a specific timeline for your project. Do not wait until the beginning of the semester to continue with your work. It is highly recommended that you establish specific dates for completion of the following:

1. Intervention
2. Section Two - Methodology
3. Section Three - Results
4. Section Four – Recommendations and Conclusions
5. Revised Special Project Proposal document including preliminaries, appendices and references
6. Review of the final Special Project by Special Project Advisor and Second Reader
7. Obtain signatures on final draft of Special Project
8. Submit final Special Project to the School of Graduate Studies

***Be sure to check the Graduate School website***

***for final submission deadlines for each semester!!***

# I. Roles and Responsibilities

### 1. Author/Investigator

The graduate student enrolled in Special Project Seminar I (PCH 593) and Special Project Seminar II (PCH 594) is solely responsible for completing and submitting the Special Project Proposal and Special Project. He or she is responsible for being thoroughly familiar with the Special Project guidelines and requirements of the School of Graduate Studies and Department of Public Health, including all completion and submission procedures and due dates. You will be expected to demonstrate mastery of project-related content and concepts, research methodology and statistical analysis, as acquired during your program of study. You are responsible for ensuring that the Special Project Proposal and Report meet accepted standards for scholarly writing, including spelling, punctuation, grammar, and format. If you are not confident that your grammar skills are sufficient to meet the expected standards, you are strongly encouraged to seek outside editorial assistance. In addition, it will be expected that you will demonstrate your ability to convey your thoughts and ideas in an acceptable written style and in a logical and coherent format.

### 2. The Special Project Advisor

The Project Advisor, who must be a member of the faculty of the Department of Public Health, accepts and assumes the major responsibility to work directly with you in completing the Special Project. The Project Advisor will work closely with you in all aspects of the Special Project experience. The role of the Project Advisor is to help ensure that the Special Project conforms to the *Special Project Guidelines*. The Project Advisor fulfills these roles by indicating areas of concern in content and/or style, and offering “reasonable” editorial assistance, the extent to which will vary with the Project Advisor. It is not the responsibility of the Project Advisor to serve as a tutor for course content and concepts that you did not previously master, but to guide you in utilizing skills already mastered from completion of your public health coursework. The Project Advisor can be expected to encourage and challenge you to create written documents of the highest quality in content and literary style that meet the standards and requirements of the Graduate School, Department, agency, and profession.

### 3. Agency Preceptor

The Agency Preceptor is selected on the basis of established expertise and willingness to mentor. The Agency Preceptor must be employed by the sponsoring organization and be supportive in the development of a specific intervention to address a problem/need experienced by the agency. In addition, it is expected that the Agency Preceptor will provide you with access to all relevant agency files and data and appropriate guidance. Since the Project Advisor has overall responsibility for approval of the content and quality of the Special Project, he or she will have the final say over differences in opinion concerning proposed changes to the Proposal or Special Project Report. If there are major concerns, the Agency Preceptor is encouraged to confer with the Project Advisor, as necessary.

### 4. The Department Chairperson

The Special Project Proposal and Final Report are both reviewed and approved by the Chair after the Advisor and Preceptor have signed off. This signature serves only to acknowledge that the Special Project Advisor has indicated that the Special Project is ready for submission to the School of Graduate Studies. The Department Chairperson is not responsible for proofreading the final Special Project for accuracy in terms of content and style.

### 5. The School of Graduate and Professional Studies

The School of Graduate Studies oversees and implements all policies and procedures governing graduate special projects and publicizes and disseminates the articulation of these policies to the graduate community. The Graduate School approves all Special Project Proposal Forms and final Special Project Acceptance Forms. The Graduate Dean is the final person to sign and approve both the proposal and the final report.

It is important to allocate adequate time for all individuals involved the process to review documents and provide signatures. Most full-time faculty contracts end on May 31st and do not begin again until the third week in August. Students are advised to consult with their Special Project Advisor in advance to develop a plan for any work that must be completed during the summer. If a student has not submitted a final Special Project document to the School of Graduate Studies by the end of the spring semester they are required to re-register for PCH 594 either during the summer (if both student and advisor are available) or the following fall semester.

# J. Procedures for Submitting Documents

### 1. Submission and Approval of the Special Project Proposal

Upon completion of your Special Project Proposal, you will submit a *Special Project Proposal Form* to the School of Graduate Studies. This form must be completed and submitted electronically and can be found on the Graduate School website at <https://www.southernct.edu/academics/graduate/research/student-research/special-project-info.html>. The form must be completed by the student and signed by the advisor, preceptor, and department chair before being submitted directly to the Graduate School using the email address on the form. Please follow the instructions on the website for completing and submitting the form.

The following reminders will help you complete your proposal and submit the required form:

1. The Special Project Advisor serves as the gatekeeper for approving the final version of the proposal, and therefore must thoroughly read the final draft of your Special Project Proposal prior to providing their signature on the Special Project Proposal Form. It is essential that you allocate adequate time for their thorough review.
2. Once your Special Project Advisor has approved your Special Project Proposal you should forward it to your Agency Preceptor for review. Your Agency Preceptor is also required to sign your Special Project Proposal Form.
3. As a final step, you must obtain the Department Chair’s signature on the Special Project Proposal Form. Once obtained, you will need to submit the form to the Graduate School.
4. Upon receipt of your Special Project Proposal Form, the Graduate Dean will review and sign the sheet and send a letter of approval to the student and Special Project Advisor.
5. Special Project Proposal Forms can be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies at any time however, your grade for PCH 593 is dependent on this submission and approval. If you do not submit your Special Project Proposal Form to the School of Graduate Studies prior to the conclusion of the semester in which you are enrolled in PCH 593, you will be required to re-enroll in PCH 593 during a subsequent semester.
6. Provide your Special Project Advisor with an electronic copy of your Special Project Proposal including all preliminaries and appendices.

The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies will review the Proposal Form and provide the final approval. The School of Graduate Studies will retain the original copy of the Proposal Form and send a formal letter of approval to the student and to the Special Project advisor. Upon receipt of this document, the student may commence work on his/her Special Project.

### 2. Submission and Approval of the Special Project Final Report

The student should work closely with the Special Project advisor to complete the Special Project. Upon completion of the proposed work, the student will submit the result of that work (the intervention or product) to his/her special project advisor, preceptor, department chair for review and approval. All three will sign the *Special Project Acceptance Form* and forward the signed form to the School of Graduate Studies. The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies will review the aforementioned approval documentation and provide the final approval, thus signifying that the student has successfully completed the Special Project.

After the Acceptance Form has been signed and submitted, you will need to provide the Department with an electronic copy of your complete final report. This can be on CD, jump drive, or by email, but you must confirm that the department has received it.

# APPENDIX A: Preceptor Letter

**Letter of Intent to Serve as Agency Preceptor**

The Special Project is one option for the culminating academic experience, required in the Master of Public Health program in the SCSU Department of Public Health. To complete an agency-based Special Project a graduate student will work with an agency preceptor to respond to a void or gap in service. The Special Project must meet the *Special Project Guidelines* published by the Department of Public Health. The Special Project is completed under the guidance and supervision of a faculty member of the Department and an Agency Preceptor. The Special Project is composed of two documents: a) the Special Project Proposal, which describes the intention methods and procedures for completing the project, and b) the Special Project Report, which describes the execution and outcomes of the project.

The student's work is monitored by the Special Project Advisor and reviewed periodically by the Agency Preceptor. The final Special Project Report is approved by the Project Advisor and Agency Preceptor.

The Agency Preceptor’s responsibilities include, but may not be limited to, the following:

1. Approve the concept for the Special Project with special attention to the needs of the agency.
2. Provide students with access to all relevant resources for completing the Special Project.
3. Provide guidance to the student and review drafts of the Prospectus and Report, as necessary.
4. Approve the Special Project, if it meets the requirements agreed upon by the student, Advisor and Agency Preceptor.

The Agency Preceptor is encouraged to contact the student's Project Advisor at any time.

**Letter of Intent to Serve as Agency Preceptor**

I have discussed the concept of the student's Special Project. I find the concept acceptable and agree to serve as the student's Agency Preceptor. I am authorized and/or will ensure authorization to approve the Special Project being undertaken in this organization.

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Preceptor's Name (Please Print)

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Preceptor’s Signature

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Preceptor’s Title Agency Department

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Agency Name

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Agency Address

(\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone FAX

Preceptor’s or Agency’s Email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Name (Please Print)

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Student’s Address

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Student’s Telephone Student’s Email

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| --- |
| **Brief Description of the Special Project**  (To include the problem/need and the proposed response) |