

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO
PUBLIC HEALTH INTERNSHIP
PROCEDURAL MANUAL

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PUBLIC HEALTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

I. Introduction

The Department of Public Health, College for Health, Community and Policy (HCaP) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), offers two Bachelors of Science degrees: Health and Public Health. Both degrees require that students complete an internship. The major goals of the internship program are:

- 1) To prepare students for entry into the public health, community health, and health service-related fields.
- 2) To ensure that graduates are knowledgeable regarding program planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- 3) To ensure that graduates have internalized positive attitudes and values toward the mission and goals of the community health and public health field.

The internship experience is required for all seniors. The internship gives the student an opportunity to apply and integrate the cognitive knowledge and skills developed in the classroom in real-world settings. A community-based internship offers a vast range of opportunities for the student to explore potential careers in different settings ranging from volunteer organizations and hospital-based programs to health and fitness centers and public and non-profit agencies. Through the internship program, the UTSA's Public Health program hopes to establish cooperative relationships with public and private organizations, resulting in a positive experience for students, the program, and the placement organizations.

- A. Health and Public Health majors are eligible to apply for the internship course if they have:
 - a. A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50;
 - b. Are within 12-13 hours of graduation (including the 6 hours of the internship) for the fall and spring semesters and within 6-7 hours of graduation for the summer semester

Note: Students with less than a 2.5 GPA should contact the internship coordinator to develop a course substitution plan.

II. Explanation of the Internship Program

Experiential learning is an indispensable and valuable element for health and public health professionals. An internship enables the student to gain practical experience as a professional under conditions conducive to educational development. The internship is a time-limited, supervised period of health education, health promotion, community health, and public health activities carried out in public and private organizations.

A. Time Requirements

- a. The student will earn 6 credit hours (on a letter grade basis) for completing the internship. During the fall or spring semester, at least twenty (20) hours a week for one full semester (15 weeks) must be spent engaged in internship site activities for a total of 300 hours. During the summer semester, at least thirty (30) hours a week for 10 weeks must be spent engaged in internship site activities for a total of 300 hours. The student is expected to adhere to agreed-upon agency hours' schedules and administrative policies. Failure to participate in scheduled internship activities (i.e. evenings or weekends) will

result in termination of the internship. Students and sites need to establish if nights and weekends will be required before completing the internship paperwork.

B. Objectives of the Internship Experience

- a. To broaden student understanding of the functioning of health-related agencies.
- b. To integrate classroom-based knowledge and skills in daily professional practice.
- c. To analyze the role of health and community health or public health professionals in agency settings.
- d. To gain an understanding of the organization, administration, program activities, and problems of placement sites.
- e. To improve student skills through on-the-job training, by allowing the student to assume specific responsibilities for planning, implementing, administering, and/or evaluating an agency program.

These objectives may be accomplished through (but are not limited to) activities found in Appendix D.

C. Financial Considerations

Internship experiences are designed to provide the student an opportunity for professional experience and should be selected on the basis of their educational quality. *The internship may be a paid experience.* The student must declare in advance if they are accepting payment for fulfilling the required internship hours on their Internship Overview Form.

Whether or not the intern is receiving payment, the sponsoring organization is expected to reimburse the intern for expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties (i.e. assigned travel, assigned attendance at workshops, etc.) if outside of the Bexar county area (or primary internship location if outside of Bexar County). Additional potential costs an intern may incur should be discussed between the site supervisor and the intern in advance of the internship. Any financial compensation to the intern student should not alter how the intern is evaluated as stipulated in this Manual.

D. Advisement and Problem Solving

The internship provides the student opportunities to learn to solve problems that arise from work duties and interpersonal relationships. Learning to problem-solve within the workplace is thus an expectation of the internship.

The following problem-solving steps should be followed:

1. If the intern encounters a problem with the placement site, it is the intern's responsibility to attempt to resolve the problem with the site supervisor and to inform the university faculty supervisor of the problem immediately by email.
2. If the problem cannot be resolved through a conference between the intern and site supervisor, the university faculty supervisor will arrange a three-way conference to address the problem.
3. If needed or requested, the student, site supervisor, and university faculty supervisor can seek the department chair's counsel or advice before a solution or decision is made.

III. Intern Roles and Responsibilities

A. Site Selection

1. Review potential internship sites on the Department's Internship web page. When submitting applications, consider how a site relates to your career goals and how an organization's objectives fit your interests.
2. Select 3 to 5 potential internship sites and contact them to request interviews.
3. Once you have secured an internship, you and your site supervisor should sign the Internship Site Guidelines Form (see Appendix B) and determine your internship schedule for the semester.
4. Complete the "Internship Overview Form" with input from the site supervisor.
5. Submit your completed "Internship Overview Form" and "Internship Site Guidelines Form" electronically via the link provided for your respective semester.

B. Course requirements

1. The internship course requires that students complete several assignments related to the internship experience throughout the semester.
2. Refer to the course syllabus for additional information related to the course requirements of the internship.

IV. Site Responsibilities

- A. All responsibilities of an internship placement site and of site supervisors are stipulated in the "Internship Site Guidelines Form."

V. University Responsibilities

- A. The Department of Public Health has the overall responsibility for developing policies for the internship program and overseeing the internship experiences. The department and faculty will:
- a. Network with health-related organizations and agencies to locate appropriate internship placements.
 - b. Orient the site to the Health and Public Health programs at UTSA.
 - c. Counsel and advise students regarding the requirements of the internship.
 - d. Review and approve the student's "Internship Overview Form."
 - e. Assist in the resolution of questions or problems that may arise regarding appropriate roles and responsibilities of the intern.
 - f. Provide professional liability insurance for student interns (\$1 million/\$3 million policy).

VI. Internship Termination

- A. If the student is terminated from the internship for any reason, the student must notify their university faculty supervisor immediately.
- B. Each termination will be resolved case by case including communication with the site supervisor, student, university faculty supervisor and department chair.
 - a. If the student is at fault, then the student will need to withdraw from the internship course.

- b. The student will forfeit that semester and any financial obligations.
 - c. The student will need to submit a request of courses to the department chair to replace the internship.
- C. If there is a resolution, then the university faculty supervisor will assist the student in completing the internship.

Appendix A: Definition of Terms

- A. Internship Coordinator
 - a. An employee of the UTSA Department of Public Health that approves internship eligibility, reviews internship packets, and approves registration for the internship course and/or capstone course
 - b. The internship coordinator may also serve as the faculty supervisor
- B. Site Supervisor
 - a. The professional at the internship site who has primary responsibility for the student intern
- C. Faculty Supervisor
 - a. The UTSA Department of Public Health faculty member who oversees the submission of the academic requirements of the internship including timesheets, progress reports, reflections, and other graded assignments via the University's learning management system

Appendix B: Internship Overview Form

The following information will be electronically entered into a form by the student. The student will receive a link to complete the form online for their appropriate semester.

Student Information

Name:

Banner:@

Email:

Cell Number:

Student Address:

Degree:

Emergency Contact Name:

Emergency Contact Number:

Academic Advisor:

If you are an athlete, who is your athletic advisor?

Internship Site Information

Internship Site Agency Name:

Site Supervisor Name:

Site Email:

Site Phone Number:

Site Address:

Is this a paid Internship?

Brief Description of Internship: Describe the activity assignments for which you will be responsible during this internship.

Provide internship hours, specifically which days/times you'll be completing internship tasks and/or at internship site:

Monday: Start Time: End Time:Tuesday: Start Time: End Time:Wednesday Start Time: End Time:Thursday Start Time: End Time:Friday: Start Time: End Time:Saturday: Start Time: End Time:Sunday: Start Time: End Time:Hours Per week:

(consider the number of weeks in the semester to ensure it equals 300+ hours)

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Appendix B: Internship Site Guidelines

Internship Site Guidelines

Student Intern

When a student assumes the role of intern in the BS in Health and Public Health degrees, the student intern agrees to the following:

1. Conduct oneself in a responsible and professional manner at all times.
2. Fulfill agreed upon time commitments. Any changes should be submitted in advance in writing to the site supervisor.
3. Carry out established activities and any additional responsibilities which are mutually agreed upon by the student and site supervisor.
4. Raise concerns with the site supervisor and faculty supervisor if the objectives for the internship are not being met or if the supervision being received is inadequate.
5. Respond to any communication from the site supervisor, university faculty supervisor, or internship coordinator in a timely manner (1-2 business days).

I have read these guidelines, and I agree to abide by them throughout the internship.

Student Full Name	Student Signature	Date
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Site Supervisor

When an organization/agency assumes the role as an internship site for students in the BS in Health and Public Health degrees, the site supervisor agrees to the following:

1. Work with the student to develop a work schedule before the first day of the internship. Develop an internship plan at the beginning of the semester that outlines the intern’s goals and expectations for the internship.
2. **Provide at least one hour of direct contact to the intern per week.** This direct contact and interaction is extremely important in allowing the intern to more fully understand the roles and responsibilities of the community health professional. This time together enables the site supervisor to observe the intern at work, setting the groundwork for evaluation, and allows the site supervisor to share their expertise with the intern. During the supervisory hour each week, the intern’s strengths and weaknesses should be discussed, along with specific suggestions on how to better carry out the internship responsibilities.
3. Ensure all requirements of the organization (background checks, immunizations, etc.) are met upon tentative acceptance of the student intern. If these requirements result in the site being unable to accept the student, the site **MUST** contact UTSA immediately to facilitate other placement options.
4. Provide the student with an orientation that includes an explanation of the background, structure, regulations and operations of the agency. This can also include additional training necessary for the intern student to complete their course assignments. Clarify relationships to higher-level administration, to other staff and to students, and give the student an understanding of the proper channels of communication.
5. Provide the intern with appropriate workspace and necessary supplies. The site is expected to reimburse the intern for expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties (i.e. assigned travel, assigned attendance at workshops, etc.) if outside of the primary internship area. Additional potential costs an intern may incur should be discussed between the site supervisor and the intern in advance of the internship.

- 6. Assign meaningful work that promotes professional growth of the intern while pursuing the goals of the placement agency. Whenever possible, provide a variety of learning opportunities including attendance at staff meetings, conferences, collaborative meetings, etc. Involvement in clerical and custodial tasks should be minimal. Foster a safe and productive work environment through ensuring the intern knows who to contact for questions about processes and procedures in the workspace including but not limited to lab safety, harassment, bullying, and misconduct
- 7. Respond to any communication from the university faculty supervisor or internship coordinator in a timely manner (2-3 business days).
- 8. Prepare two evaluations of the student intern, one midway through the experience and the other during the last week of the internship.

I have read these guidelines, and I agree to work with the student as described above.

Site Supervisor Name	Site Supervisor Signature	Date
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Name of Agency/Organization: _____

Appendix D: Acceptable Internship Activities

The student's internship activities must focus on developing skills and strengths necessary for public health work. These may include but are not necessarily limited to the following. Please reach out to the internship coordinator if you have questions and/or want to discuss other activities.

1. Research activities

- a. Survey and data collection design, implementation, and/or analysis
- b. Participant recruitment/engagement
- c. Conducting literature reviews
- d. Writing manuscripts
- e. Other research dissemination (developing presentations, posters, white papers, etc.)

2. Primary and secondary prevention

- a. Health screenings
- b. Motivational interviewing
- c. Immunization registration
- d. Behavioral coaching

3. Health promotion activities

- a. Curriculum development
- b. Program planning, implementation, and/or evaluation
- c. Delivering workshops or classes
- d. Serving as a health resource
- e. Applying health theories to materials, programs, or services

4. Assessment of Needs and Capacity

- a. Identifying existing and available resources, policies, programs, practices, and interventions
- b. Assessing existing and available resources, policies, programs, practices, and interventions
- c. Listing the needs of the priority population(s)
- d. Engaging community stakeholders

5. Health communication and marketing

- a. Developing educational materials on health promotion/disease prevention for print and electronic media
- b. Increasing health literacy and/or numeracy
- c. Examining and addressing factors affecting communication
- d. Identifying and influencing marketing trends for population of interest
- e. Evaluating impact of communication

6. Environmental and occupational health

- a. Implementing or evaluating worksite wellness activities
- b. Encouraging or evaluating occupational safety practices
- c. Employing infection prevention and control activities
- d. Monitoring and/or employing food safety practices

7. Policy, advocacy, and coalition-building

- a. Contributing to new or changing policies including information gathering and writing policy drafts
- b. Evaluating current policy impacts
- c. Attending or facilitating meetings of the organization, stakeholders, etc.
- d. Advocating for public health initiatives
- e. Identifying available resources and gaps (e.g., financial, personnel, information, and data)
- f. Evaluating advocacy efforts

8. Leadership and management

- a. Facilitating events to promote health and/or promote agency/organization
- b. Developing schedules and organizing meetings/appointments
- c. Supervising volunteers
- d. Planning training/education, including technical assistance and support
- e. Developing guidelines, policies, and procedural manuals
- f. Writing grants and funding proposals
- g. Engaging in a health organization's strategic planning process